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PUNCH or The London Charivari December 30 1953

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PUNCH OFFICE 10 BOUVERIE STREET LONDON E. C. 4

WORKERS IN THE TEAM

Number 4 in a series

Barnabas Siankombo, a member of the Tonga tribe, was born at Simwambwa, in Northern Rhodesia, twenty-one years ago.

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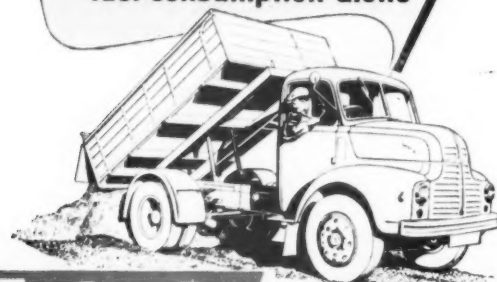
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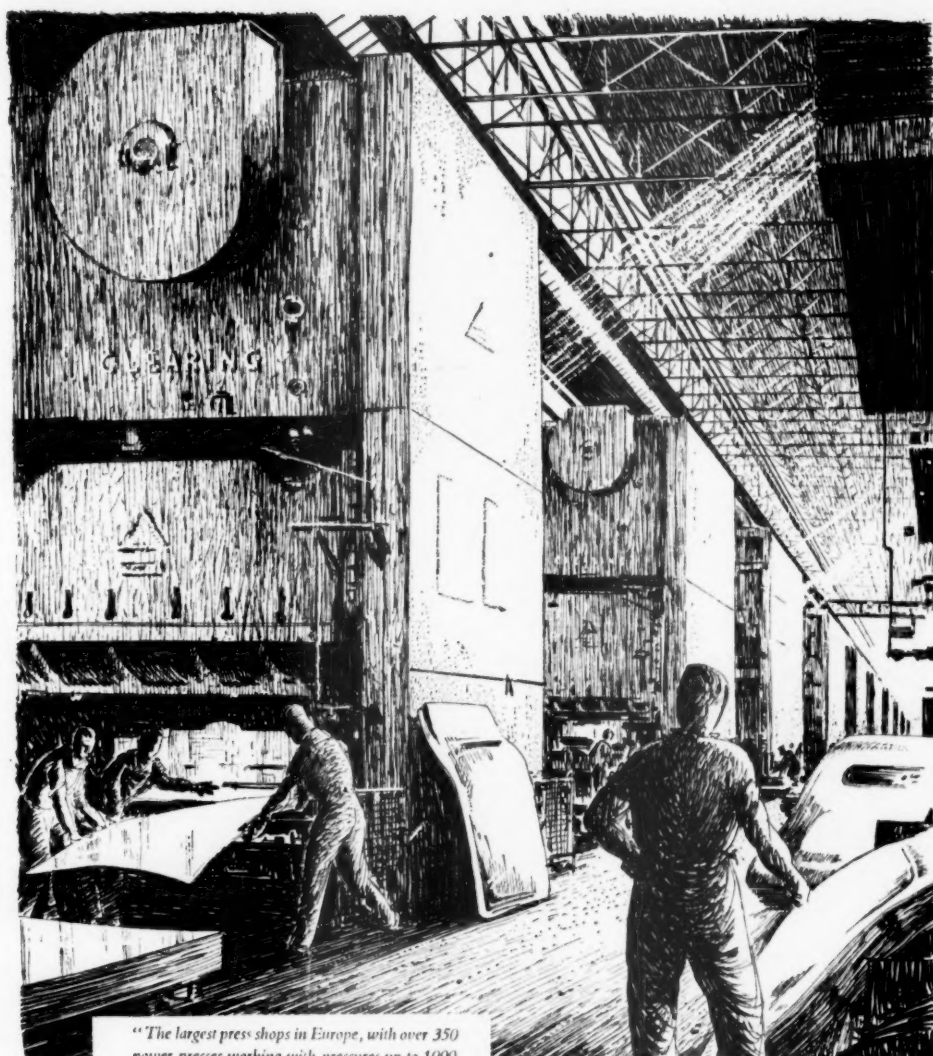
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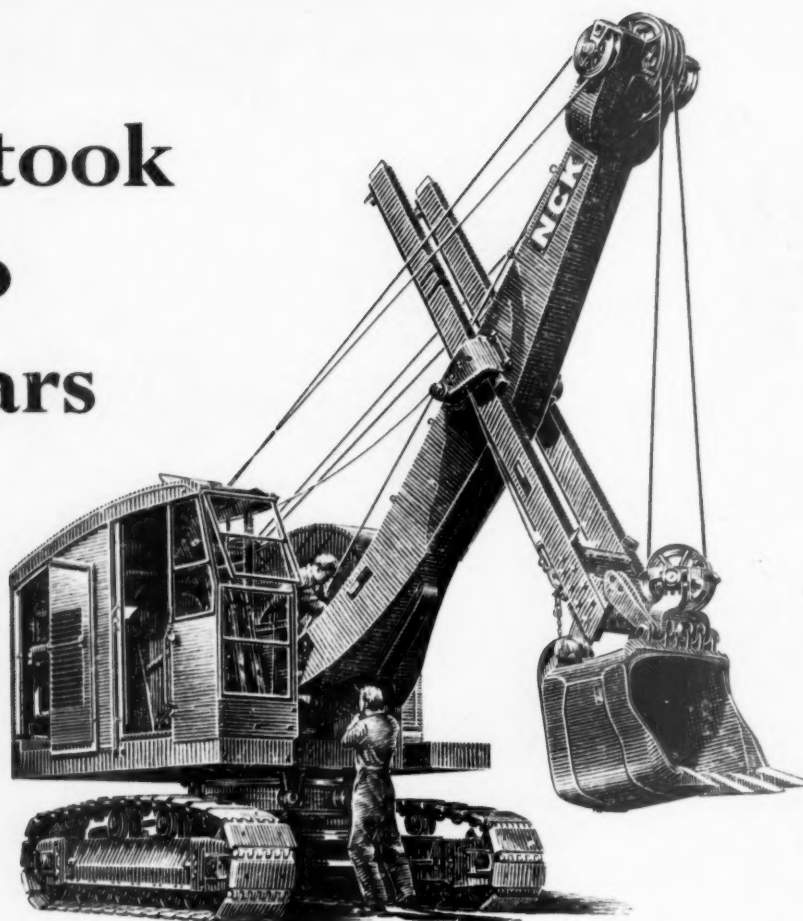
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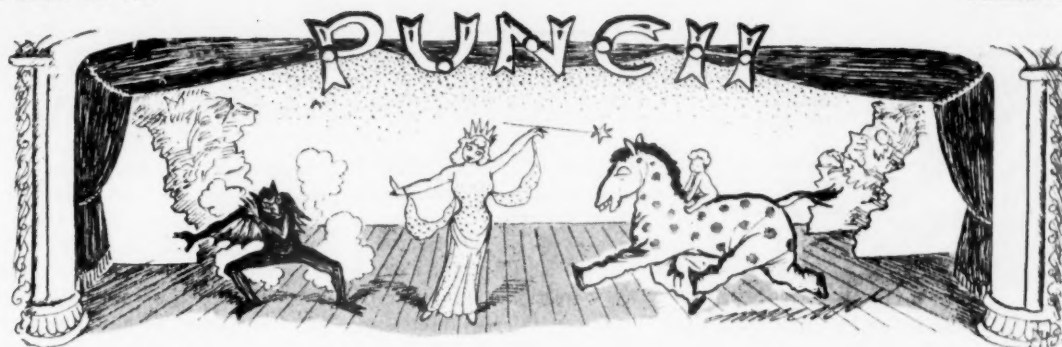
The giant excavator has become a symbol of our time, for its function is to help re-shape the world. And excavators made by Newton Chambers are busy from the Arctic to the Antarctic. They are playing a part in projects as varied as the clearing of tropical sites and the recovery of stone from the frozen north for paving the streets of London. They can

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CHARIVARIA

HUSBANDS who found that Christmas had come and gone while they still hadn't decided what to give their wives will be interested in a perennial gift-token scheme. This involves artistic vouchers in pastel shades, with a space for the donor's autograph as a personal touch. Obtainable from all banks.



High officials at the B.B.C. were much concerned when a reference to flying saucers caused listeners to a comedy programme to telephone Whitehall; they think that it is more than ever desirable to include periodic announcements in this type of broadcast, assuring us that it is meant to be funny.

Dr. Edith Summerskill has revealed that during her tenure of office as Food Minister she often received pieces of hard cheese from members of the public. But at least she knew what they were getting at, which is more than Miss Horsbrugh can make out from some of her correspondence at the Ministry of Education.

From February, announces the Ministry of Food, egg markings are to be changed from A, B and C to Large, Medium and Small. A suggested local variation is Good, Bad and Indifferent.

In an interview in *Radio Times*, Mr. Ronald Waldman, head of Television light entertainment, says: "It's no job for anyone who is easily frightened. Progress, experiment, trial and error—that is how I see our development." A build-up, in fact, to the deliberate mistake.



Early in the New Year an excursion organized by the National Farmers' Union will take Londoners into the country to study life. Doctors are to stand by as suburban milkmen get their first sight of a cow.

Brighton's *Evening Argus* is a serious rival to *The Recorder* in its success with startling and out-of-the-rut news items, and the Egyptian report headed "ROCKET FIRED AT HAMLET" presages, no doubt, an Equity inquiry into the whole subject of touring companies abroad.



Free sweets are given away to waiting customers by a Manchester barber specializing in children's haircutting. The trouble is to extort an admission from the next gentleman, please.

The Postmaster-General is proposing to double the charge for inland telegrams. Angry members of the public should wire their protests now, and enjoy the old rate.

Over certain lines of British Railways some passengers find it impossible to eat the soup because of the train's excessive jolting. Others simply find it impossible to eat the soup.



Sir Walter Monckton is said to have welcomed the news that workmen were being sent to Coventry by their colleagues. Direction of labour has at last gained general recognition.



THIS is the season when speculation runs on who may be considered the Man of the Year. No doubt many eminent names have been considered, but I should like myself to make a plea for Major Saleh Salem, Minister of National Guidance in the Egyptian Government. It was only in the early part of this year that most of us heard of Major Salem for the first time. He appeared in a remarkable photograph which showed him, largely unclad, joining in a tribal dance with some tribesmen in the Southern Sudan. Prancing about in his under-pants he presented a most spirited spectacle, even though his physique and up-bringing scarcely fitted him for so strenuous a quadrille.

This episode, though distinguished, would not, in itself, have made the Major a particularly strong candidate for the Man of the Year award. It was, however, only a beginning. Not merely did Major Salem become an eminent figure in General Neguib's Government. He played, as well, an important rôle in negotiating the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement on the Sudan which gives every promise of resulting in the Sudan becoming in due course part of the Kingdom of Egypt. Thus it can be said that the Major has succeeded where Zaghlul, Nahas, and even King Farouk, failed.

This is a very considerable achievement, the more remarkable because Major Salem and his colleagues had, seemingly, many difficult hazards to circumvent. There was, for instance, the fact that a Conservative Government was in power in England. Had it been a Labour Government, his success, especially after Dr. Moussadek's short way with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, would have merited no more than a polite mention. The Prime Minister however, was Sir Winston Churchill, not Mr. Attlee; the Foreign Secretary

HURRAH FOR MAJOR SALEM

was Mr. Eden, not Mr. Herbert Morrison. A lesser man than Major Salem might have drawn back appalled before such opposition. Sir Winston Churchill, after all, was on record as having no intention of presiding over the dissolution of the British Empire, of which the Sudan was indubitably a part—as a matter of fact, one of the few remaining parts in good order. By the same token, Mr. Eden, when in opposition, was on record as being resolved to send Haifa-bound tankers through the Suez Canal under armed escort if the Egyptians continued stopping them. It is true that, in office, he has shown little disposition to make good this threat, but still, there it was, in *Hansard*, for all to see.

Then again, in negotiating, Major Salem was pitted against a brilliant Foreign Office team, headed by Sir Ralph Stevenson, who had come to Cairo from the Far East, where he had covered himself with glory by pointing out the many advantages which would accrue from recognizing the Peking Government. These experienced and sagacious antagonists did not overawe the Major, who took them on without interrupting the steady stream of anti-British pronouncements which his office required. Like all great men of action

his strategy was essentially simple. He adopted the well-worn device, favoured by Hitler, Stalin and other famous figures of the age, of making an agreement and then immediately breaking it, in the confident expectation that those with whom he had made it would thereby be induced to try to make another.

It may seem unfair to give Major Salem credit for an achievement in which others participated. Yet any fair-minded person must admit that his rôle has been a leading one, and especially so during the recent Sudanese elections. He threw himself into the campaign with fervour. Money was freely dispensed, promises were freely made, and just in case any Sudanese voter should be so foolish as to suppose any benefit might accrue from a continued association with this country, it was made clear that, by order of General Neguib, Sudanese membership of the British Commonwealth was, in any case, ruled out. The result justified all Major Salem's hopes. Now the Sudanese may confidently look forward to participating in the high level of civilization and of uncorrupt administration for which the lower reaches of the Nile have long been famous.

Hurrah, then, for Major Salem. Dr. Moussadek wept, and British oil interests dissolved in his tears; Major Salem danced, and, hey presto, the edifice of British colonial administration in the Sudan crumbled away. Who knows but what the Major, emboldened by this success, may not enter into negotiations for yet another Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, under whose terms we, in our turn, may be asked to vote for or against union with Egypt? MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE



"I'm a British M.P. who couldn't go to Cairo."

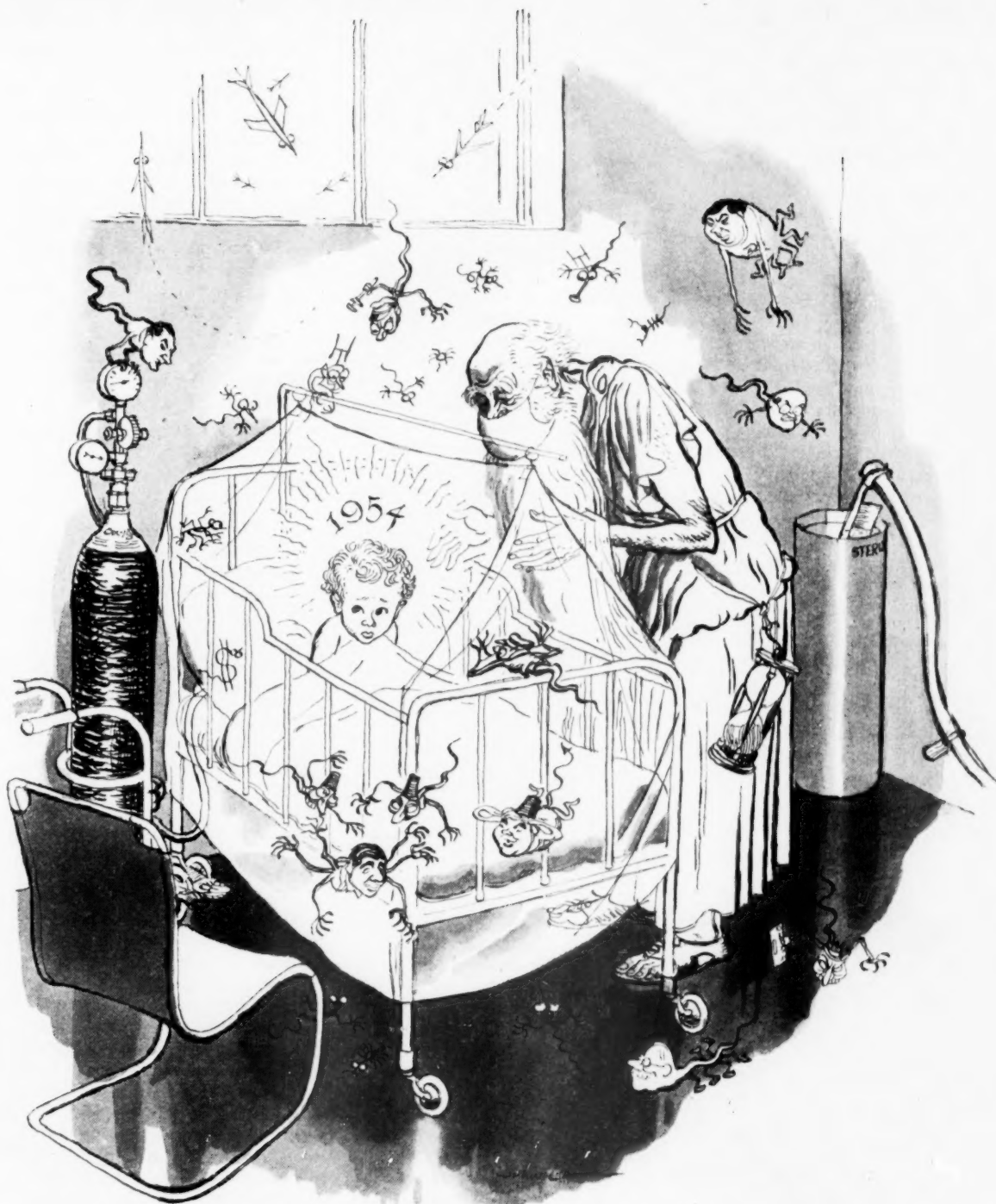
"London, to them [the French], is wreathed in a perpetual fog through which sex maniacs and policemen dance a sinister pas de deux."

Nancy Mitford in *The Sunday Times*

"The French have a touching and possibly exaggerated belief in the civic virtues of the English."

The same, lower down the paragraph

We're a puzzle all right.



TIME TO GET UP

Headlines of 1953

BY H. F. ELLIS

THE mistake made by nearly all journalists who attempt at this season to distil the essence of the past year in a couple of thousand words is that they skimp the job. They content themselves with running through the top headlines on the main news pages of their own papers and jotting down "Docker—Sweets Off Ration—Stalin Dead—Tito—Coronation" and so on. This is useless. Essences are not distilled as easily as that. If you want to get the real flavour of the year as it unfolded its petals day by day, you must read *all* the headlines; you must secure the files of two or three national newspapers and turn the pages one by one, beginning with January 1 and ending only when the eyes have sunk so far into the head as to be incapable any longer of looking down the nose at print. Then you will have something.

It only remains to say what.

"Moustache in Tenor's Throat"

Yes, it was on January 1, 1953, that Mr. Walter Midgley ushered in the New Year by swallowing half his moustache (the left half, according to the *Daily Telegraph* of the following day) while singing in

Rigoletto at Covent Garden. How time flies! But how appropriate a start for a year that was to prove, in so many ways, to be an *annus mirabilis*.

Mr. Midgley's contretemps ended happily. He managed, in his own words, to "cough it up"; and the sequel—his determination to paint his moustaches on in future—is well known. But what became of Guru Charan Dass, who on that self-same January 1 declared his intention to start a "fast to death," with his wife and four children, outside No. 10 Downing Street? Was he in earnest, or was his threat as empty as that of Dr. Moussadek who, some months later, started a similar fast with a dish of boiled chicken and rice? I cannot tell. I cannot even explain why Dr. Moussadek himself is still alive. For it was on September 23 that the *Daily Express* declared

"2 a.m. MOSSADEG TO HANG"

in a headline of extraordinary size and vigour. There is a discrepancy here: the *Daily Express* of December 22 declared

"MOSSADEG GETS THREE YEARS' SOLITARY"

However, we are getting through the year too rapidly. It is not as easy as you might think to read the files of a newspaper methodically and in chronological order. One thing leads to another. The eye is constantly caught by items of high potentiality, half-told tales that demand to be followed up, hints and mysteries that set one scrabbling through issue after issue in search of a pay-off that never comes. This Guru Charan Dass, for instance—
anxiety to learn the end of his story took me at a gallop through thirty issues, and I only stopped at February 5 because the sinister headlines

"DULLES GIVES EDEN AN ULTIMATUM"

Join Europe by April 20, or else . . ."

made it imperative to take a leap into April and see what had become of us on the fatal date. Well, it was bad enough. Messrs. Cohn and Schine were due in London on the twenty-first.

January—March

The first quarter of 1953! Memories of the old days crowd in upon the mind, however rapidly the pages are turned in search of Dass or Dulles. These were the days when skirts were longer, and the name of Mr. R. S. Thacker was on every lip. The days of Miles William Giffard and Lee Meng and Minor (Mickey) Jelke. "Your Fireside Tiles may be Radioactive" warned the *Express*, but the people of Britain refused to panic. "Secret Soviet Heavy Cruisers at Sea" said the *Telegraph* Naval Correspondent, and the response was the same. Spring was in the air, and there was a confident feeling that, come what might, *The Times* would have a photograph of the Australians playing cricket in front of Worcester Cathedral on April 30. Tito sailed up the Thames and Laslo Szilvassy crumpled up a model of "The Unknown Prisoner" in the Tate Gallery. Tito's remark at a reception "Ah! The English peoples. They are so hot, so warm!" was generally felt to be well meant,



R. Rackham

and Mr. Reg Butler's philosophical "You take about a shillingworth of wire and bend it about in a certain way, and it becomes a symbol powerful enough to make someone want to destroy it" opened the eyes of the philistines and shed new light on the tendency of British parents to dislike the giraffes made of pipe-cleaners habitually given to them by their small daughters on their birthdays.

A typically evocative headline of this period is:

"Little Black Books set Big Names Trembling"

Express, Feb. 3

But whom, and what does it evoke?

April—June

How well the *Daily Express* set the keynote of this happy second quarter!

"Never" (said "Opinion," on April 6) "since the first of all the Easter Mondays has there been better reason to be joyful and of good cheer than there is this happy day.

"Forget the showers that may come in the April wind. Forget the cost of living.

"Look instead to the East. For there, over Russia, the clouds of war begin at last to scatter and the warm sunshine of peace peeps shyly through."

And at the bottom of the column:

"Talking Point

O God! How lovely still is life!
Schiller"

O God, yes. It was a wonderful time. Slow to get into its stride perhaps:

"Easter Traffic Hit By Storms" said the *Telegraph*, and, on the same day (April 6)

"Moscow Home Radio Attacks West Policy"

but the daffodils were out (remember it?), Malenkov had a frank and open countenance, and by April 15 there was such a lull that the *Telegraph* was able to spare space for

"WOMAN OF 103 GETS NEW HAT"

So to the end of April, with *The Times* photographer safely at



"That's the dulllest party I can remember."

Worcester and only another eight months of newsprint to raffle gaily through.

Or say six. For November and December are still fresh and clear in the reader's mind. It would be an insult to jog his memory about affairs so recent. Let us by all means say six. Already, after a mere four months of it, the headlines pulsate in a curious way and the name of Dulles tolls, with every repetition, more funereally in the recesses of the brain. The impression grows that 1953 consisted largely of warnings from Dulles, with some intermittent quarrelling between clergymen and their parishioners

going on in the wings. It is high time to get on to May and June.

May and June! These, of course, were the Coronation months, and there is a case for skipping them too. Every reader has his own memories of this time, and, even if he had not, the B.B.C. could be relied upon to make up the deficiency. I shall therefore content myself with opening an early May issue of the *Telegraph*—

"RECTOR WINS LIBEL SUIT"

or, rather, a late June issue of the *Express*, where a single phrase

"Drobny has Shingles"

recalls an incident that may well

have slipped the reader's memory, and at the same time evokes all the rich pageantry of last summer's sport.

We can now resume serious reading for the Third Quarter.

July-September

There was a certain rowdyism about July. "Drop Sponsored TV Says Dr. Fisher" appeared on the first, and the note of sharpness perceptible here persisted throughout the month. Butchers banged ewe-mutton about in a regular tizzy, Malenkov arrested Beria, and the headline

"Cansdale Brings Bush Baby into Row"

reminds us that Zoo circles had got themselves into one of their periodical spins. But not all was dark. East Berlin reopened the frontier to all comers, and the warm sunshine of

peace might well have peeped shyly through again had it not been obscured by volleys of food parcels thrown recklessly from Zone to Zone. The phrase "Frog-Maker Jailed" occurs in my notes, but its relevance is obscure and must be left to those who care to turn up the *Express* for July 22. The appearance of Mr. Clore's name gives promise of better things to come.

Mr. Dulles warned the Reds on August 8, but I do not know what about because a Soviet cruiser, of the Sverdlov class, had quitted the Baltic at high speed on August 2 ("Soviet Cruiser Mystery") and I was reading fast to find out what had become of it. You get callous when you are chasing a news item, and all those photographs of Stranded Britons sitting on their suitcases from August 9 onwards went past me as a dull grey blur. Still, they are

part of the essence of 1953 and must be borne in mind.

"Crack Russian Cruiser in Atlantic"

Yes, there it was! Sailing about, fifteen days later (August 17), for all the world as if it had a right to be in the Atlantic—as I suppose, in a way, it had. But what a triumph for the newshounds. They never give up when the safety of the country is at stake. "National security," as *The Times* said, in another connection, on September 19, "requires unremitting vigilance."

This other connection, as a matter of fact, was Mrs. Maclean, who can scarcely be left unmentioned if the flavour of September is not to be altogether lost. But a mention will be enough.

"SHE'S BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN"

declared the *Express* of September 19, and *The Times* of the same date said, more non-committally,

Whereabouts of Mrs. Maclean

—a headline, incidentally, that pleased the Editor so much that it was repeated *verbatim* on the following day.

October—December

Or say October, as already agreed. The only thing is that I don't honestly want to read any more newspapers just now. I shall have to trust to my recollection, and my recollection is that Britain loosed off an atomic weapon or two sometime in October. So what I suggest is, let's sit quietly in front of the fire, shall we, and get the flavour of that. Bearing in mind all the time, of course, that the fireside tiles may be radioactive.

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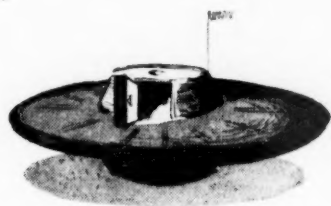
Punch Index

THE indexes of PUNCH contributions will in future be issued separately. The latest, for July to December, 1953, may be obtained free on application to The Publisher, PUNCH, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Readers who have their copies bound in the standard binding covers need not apply. As from the current volume the indexes will be supplied with the covers.



"Oh, stop fooling about!"



A Sad Case of Conscience

BY TOM DRIBERG



RECENTLY found myself faced with an acutely difficult problem of what may be called a political-ethical kind (if the term be not thought too sharply self-contradictory). It arose while I was spending an afternoon in New York with Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, the well-known investigator and *malleus*, or hammer, of Reds, Pinks and, no doubt, some Blues. As a journalist and politician studying contemporary American trends, I had thought it my duty to contact the Senator; and he had been good enough (or smart enough) to invite me to attend a private session of a senatorial committee then investigating an alleged spy-ring in the U.S. Army Signal Corps.

The appointment had been made on the day before the hearing. I did not flatter myself that the Senator had been aware previously of my existence or political views; but my American friends were unanimous on one point—that by the time we met, his high-powered research staff would have checked up on me, not necessarily accurately but with X-ray thoroughness, and would have informed him that I was, politically, several points to his Left. "Boy!" said one friend, "are you sticking your neck out going there! He's got a file on everybody, but *everybody*."



His Security is fabulous, but *fabulous*." I almost expected to be frisked for weapons on arrival.

No such thing occurred. I got to the Federal Court-house in Foley Square at two o'clock, as instructed, and was taken to the fourteenth floor.

The Senator, a beetle-browed man of informal address, was discussing the afternoon's proceedings with several of his associates, in Room 1402. This was the two-roomed office of Mr. Roy Cohn, the attorney whose "lightning" inspection of American establishments in Europe, in company with Mr. Schine, caused a flutter of alarm and amusement some months ago. I was introduced to these gentlemen, each of us severally reciting our names, in the informative American way. It would have been fanciful to find their manner towards me other than polite: if it was slightly guarded, I could not, of course, see what amulets, periapts, or cloves of garlic might or might not be concealed about their persons.

We then went down in a lift to the court in which the hearing was to be held. On the way Mr. Cohn, a slight, sallow young man with anxious, roving eyes and a fretful manner, asked me only two questions: "You a member of Parliament?" "Yes." "Which party?" "Laborite," I replied, knowing from my study of American news-magazines that this was the correct translation of "Labour."

The Senator himself supervised the Committee's proceedings attentively, as indeed he must have felt bound to, since he was the only member of it present; but Mr. Cohn was, quite clearly, the Committee's *éminence jaune*. He prompted the remarkable ruling (when the absence of the rest of the Committee was challenged) that one was a quorum; he consulted frequently with the Senator in whispers; he himself asked most of the questions (which, on the whole, it seemed safer not to answer at all, since any witness who did answer was at once involved in a perilous web of perjury and/or contempt if he was unable to remember, say, the exact details of a passing

chat of five years ago with some neighbour, acquaintance, or fellow-employee).

After about an hour of this, the circumstance arose which was to lead to my ethical dilemma. Mr. Cohn had been whispering to the Senator rather more intently than usual, and I noticed, with a slight twinge of apprehension, that they were glancing at me. Then the Senator explained, courteously enough, that their next witnesses were to be Army witnesses; that the Army insisted that all present during such interrogations should have a special security permit which I obviously did not have; and that it would therefore be convenient if I would wait, for an hour or two, "up in Roy's office."

The day was fine. For half an hour I explored this downtown part of New York. Then I returned to the Court-house.

I nodded familiarly to the police officer on guard in the hall and went up to the fourteenth floor. The door of Mr. Cohn's office was locked, and there seemed to be no-one in it. I went down to the hall again and—assuming the prefectorial air, at once casual and authoritative, which usually works in most countries—asked the first uniformed guard I saw to unlock Room 1402. "Senator McCarthy and Mr. Cohn asked me to wait up there for them," I explained.

The Senator and Mr. Cohn were busy with their hearing. Another member of the Senator's retinue confirmed perfunctorily what I said. Within a few minutes I found myself in Mr. Cohn's inner office—alone, for perhaps an hour, and surrounded by open desks and files marked "McCarthy."

Can any man say with complete honesty that he has never felt even the slightest temptation, if left alone near somebody else's desk, to read without permission a letter or other document? I believe that the temptation is almost universal—though, of course, all properly brought up Britons will resist it sternly.

In this case there was, as I say, a certain conflict of impulse. The



"This one is still on the secret list."

politician in me—disapproving intensely of the Senator and all his works, curious about his methods—was at war with the ex-prefect, to whom it would be unthinkable dishonourable even to touch the papers on another man's desk.

While my two consciences wrestled with each other (setting up convulsive spasms of spiritual indigestion) I felt free at least to examine the objects displayed on the wall; one can often, I think, learn a lot about a man from what he chooses so to display. They included framed letters to Mr. Cohn from Mr. J. Edgar Hoover and other distinguished persons, congratulating him on his brilliance as an attorney, and framed photographic enlargements of Hearst newspaper editorials in the same sense. There was a plaque from an anti-Communist Jewish organization given to Mr. Cohn in recognition of his "outstanding accomplishment in the cause of Americanism" (with a

framed photograph of the presentation of the plaque). There were some colourful tourist souvenirs of Capri, and a grip labelled "Cunard-White Star, 1st Class." There was also, among other books on a desk, one entitled "Mental Callisthenics."

Callisthenics are, I believe, gymnastic exercises. My own bout of moral gymnastics did not last too long. In due course a colleague of Mr. Cohn's came in, and we talked until it was time to rejoin the Senator. I am (on the whole) glad to say that when I left that office the files were as virginal, if that is the word, as when I entered it. But I am still a bit puzzled that the most security-conscious of living politicians—to whom, moreover, one gathers, the mildest pink is hardly less dangerous a colour than the gaudiest red—should be, apparently, so indifferent to the presence of a potential Trojan horse in his own private stable.

* * *

Candour obliges me to add one

afterthought. Should I have been able to resist temptation if I had known that there was no risk whatever of being caught in the shameful act? Fear of discovery *may* have been a deterrent; for it would indeed have been embarrassing if the door had opened while my hand was in a drawer or a file; and through my mind there did just flit the painful fantasy that to touch anything might set loud bells jangling throughout the building. But . . . just suppose that I had been absolutely sure of immunity . . . ?

Fortunately, the Inner Self, like Mr. Speaker and the more experienced Cabinet Ministers, refuses firmly to answer hypothetical questions.

~ ~

No Push-over

"An American airman . . . was found hiding in the cargo hold of a Pan-American Stratocruiser soon after it left London Airport last night. He was allowed to stay on the 'plane.'—*Daily Mail*

OUR OWN
News-Letter

Nos. 1-3000 December, 1953. Founded and Edited by Monica Champion

"Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom;
and a great empire and little minds go ill together." Burke

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IN RUSSIA NOW

Cherished Member,—It is becoming increasingly difficult to gauge the effects of Stalin's death on Soviet foreign policy. Has there been a change of heart behind the forbidding yet architecturally admirable walls of the Kremlin? Is Russia softening? Is the great Asiatic bear now prepared to link arms with the lion, the eagle and the cock and move forward to the broad uplands of universal peace?

Or is it a case of *plus ça change*...? Is Russia under Malenkov and Molotov (who can now be regarded as the joint-leaders, for Beria, I understand, is in disgrace) the Russia of Josef Stalin?

We do not know.

But we must take notice of certain recent developments in Soviet trade. According to *Pravda* Russia has now agreed to barter one hundred and fifty thousand tons of grade two pine for certain export reject machine tools stranded in Chicago.

I do not want to raise hopes

unduly, member, but these moves are clearly "*departures*." It may be too early to press Russia to allow the Arts Council to send a cultural mission to Georgia—one of the late Lord Mildew's fondest hopes, you will remember—but we can at least urge Mr. Thorneycroft to do his best for caviar lovers. It really is quite stupid, is it not, that the Russians should have surplus stocks of this delicacy (they, themselves, vastly prefer rye bread and cabbage soup) while gentlefolk in Britain are simply aching for an occasional tidbit at a reasonable price?

More about Russia in my next letter.

WHAT PRICE SECURITY? The recent rumpus in the United States over the Harry Dexter White case spotlights once again our own urgent need to disinfect Whitehall against the Communist virus. It would be impolitic and unfriendly, not to say downright foolish, to pass judgment on America's handling of this *cause célèbre*, but clearly we have the right and duty to profit by trans-Atlantic experience and example.

How many Communists are there in the service (*soi-disant*) of the British Government? The figures are hard to come by, but the *South Wales Echo* suggested recently that the total number of Reds in Britain is some 30,501. If we assume that one in every five hundred is an active cell—that is, a person owing allegiance to and in contact with the U.S.S.R.—then there must be something like sixty Harry Dexter Whites in the British Civil Service. And small though this number may seem to those familiar with statistics it is none the less distinctly alarming.

Stern measures must be adopted to remove these vipers from the bosom of government.

As I disclosed last week (by the

way I still have a few thousand copies of this letter. May I forward them to your friends? A special December reduction makes the mailing price 50 for £4 15s.) it is now considered more than likely that Dr. Bruno Pontecorvo, the former Harwell scientist, has been lured to Russia.

Pontecorvo was the star in a family of exceptional ability. He did extremely well at his elementary school at Pisa, and passed all his exams, at the *Ginnasio* and the Classical *Licco* with flying colours. Those of his tutors who are still alive remember him as a likeable student of great promise. Well, Pontecorvo's subsequent shortcomings—if they were shortcomings—must be a lesson to us. On the other hand we can take comfort from the fact that every scientist lured to Russia means one less at work as a spy in Britain.

SMOG OR FOKE? The weather here in Hertfordshire has been seasonable. The trees are now bare of leaves and the lawns beneath the great oaks are carpeted with rotting acorns. Remembering London's disastrous winter of 1952-53 we have all watched apprehensively for the first signs of fog, but so far we have been lucky. Light morning mists, haziness at sundown, and that is all. From afar we can only wonder at the preparations made in London to combat the "smog" menace. I am told that special masks are likely to be worn, the idea being to filter the atmosphere of its noxious particles before inhalation.

Incidentally, why "smog"? This portmanteau word is a combination of "smoke" and "fog," but would not "foke" (fog-smoke) be a more suitable term? It is certainly more euphonious, and I personally like its undertones of chumminess and all-together-ness.



Whatever we finally decide to dub it this horrid mixture remains a serious problem. It should be tackled energetically.

IN A GLASS DARKLY. I am sorry to hear that the Government is still thinking in terms of sponsored television. To my mind the very idea of advertising on the air is repugnant and un-English. I have never actually seen television in action and have no intention of doing so, but I deplore any suggestion of the commercialization of the ether.

This seems to me a subject likely to arouse a good deal of controversy in coming months, and I should therefore be pleased to have my readers' views. Meanwhile let me quote from a letter received from a lady in Dorset (Mrs. Ellsmore Byng): "Please, oh please, tell us what you think about sponsored TV. We really do need guidance. Here we are hopelessly divided. Would the advertisements be for such things as soap-flakes, cigarettes, shampoos, dog biscuits and so on, or would they be high-class ads. for houses, furs, domestic servants and the rest? That, it seems to us, is the crux of the matter."

Well, Mrs. Byng, I'm afraid I can't help yet, but I've no doubt that some of our clever pen-friends can. Let us see, eh?

HELLO! WHAT'S THIS? From New York I hear that certain people claim to have seen strange disc-shaped objects in the sky. It occurs to me that such contraptions, if their existence can be proved, *may* be visitors from outer space, perhaps from some inhabited planet. I find speculation of this sort wonderfully exciting.

AND ABOUT TIME TOO! I am glad to see that the *Sunday Times* is once more discussing the plight of the depressed middle or professional classes. These people—they may include us!—have been caught in a double-squeeze between rising prices and increased taxation and many of them are having a jolly hard time to make ends meet. It is all the more discouraging, of course, because other classes seem to have escaped the

worst of the squeeze: the "workers," for instance, get family allowances, free medical service, practically free meals at school and in workers' canteens, pensions and paid holidays, and in return pay very little tax. I do not object in principle to the Welfare State but I am sure that it should be financed solely by those who benefit from it.

It seems ludicrous to me that I should have to pay high fees to keep my son at his public school and *in addition* to finance the education of my gardener's son at the village school. Things would not be so bad if the workers accepted all this help with becoming humility, but they are far from grateful. Only last week when I remonstrated with him my gardener informed me that he was thinking of allowing some other gentlewoman the privilege of financing his son's education—meaning, of course, that he was giving me notice of his intention to quit my employ.

Let us hope that Mr. Butler will



"Mortal, thy heart's desire dost wish me to contrive?
Five pounds a week, for instance, at age sixty-five..."

have a few pleasant surprises for us next April.

GREETINGS AND GOOD CHEER! But before April, dear reader, we encounter another great occasion, a more reasonable excuse for celebration. I refer, of course, to the New Year, and I cannot put down my pen without extending to you, personally, my best wishes for your happiness and prosperity.

Let me express the hope that 1954 will still find you a member of this happy News-Letter team. The nicest present you could give *me* would be another dear reader of my weekly epistles. Or even several dear readers! But then I mustn't be greedy. The subscription for fifty-two weekly news-letters delivered post-free every Monday is £3 6s. 8d.

Yours sincerely

Monica Champion

p.p. BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



Planetoid 2003

BY J. MACLAREN-ROSS

Synopsis

IN the year 2003, the set-up's not so hot—literally! Cryogen rays telecast by a totalitarian State to up the curve of the Cold War to a new high, have induced glaciation of much of the global surface: only the U.S.A. and Little Britain (now a satellite colony) have escaped the frozen scourge. Culturally, the level rates low: top-grade lit. has been edged out by an octopoid paperback campaign launched by Binomial Oceanic Science Syndicate Inc. (BOSS), a super-powerful combine of magazine and book publishers, who control, also, most mass-communications media (TV programs, Depth Pix, etc.) and, by offering sky-rocket prizes for science-fiction fantasia, have astrayed authors from their real vocation.

JOE DOAX, young star-exec. in the BOSS network, suspects that KERMIT RASK, the Cartel Prexy, is factually using the organization for undercover purposes of political reaction: to obtain, by lowering collective I.Q., control over the human race. BOSS, on Rask's orders, has up-bought and sealed-off all national libraries from the new generation; but Joe obtains nonetheless a rare tome, *Planetoid 127*, by EDGAR WALLACE, the central idea of which—another world existing on the opposite side of the sun—was supposedly authored by Rask himself! From this gimmick, and its socko impact on public taste, the vast fortune garnered by BOSS originally stemmed; and a mysterious European, calling himself JULIUS VERNON, informs Joe that in the

vaults of the Little British Museum—not yet overtaken by BOSS—the real classics of Sci. Fic. are still shelved: that, moreover, *Planetoid 127* (the Planet Neo) exists as a Valhalla for the dead masters of the genus—immortal by reason of their work. Joe confides in his succulent secretary JANE DOE; they attempt to organize a strike among the mag-men but, accused of un-cultural activities, are pursued by a blood-mad mob. President Rask subdues the lynchies by use of cryogen-throwers and demands the Edgar Wallace vol. as the price of the young couple's safety.

Rask is out-knocked by CRAIG KENNEDY, scientific sleuth, opposed to the BOSS conspiracy; and the lovers are smuggled to Britain's fog-bound coast in a submarine skippered by enigmatic CAPTAIN NEMO. Vernon,

also aboard, reveals that he is JULES VERNE, prototype of Science Fiction aces, and that Nemo is one of his characters; while Kennedy is the creation of an American author (also deceased): ARTHUR B. REEVE. The immortal inhabitants of the solar-concealed planet, together with most of their brain-children, are pacted to destroy the technocrat tycoons and their bid for terrestrial domination.

Arrived on British soil, on route through swirling mist to the Museum, Joe and Jane are halted by a squad of pseudo-Bobbies: from under one of the helmets, Joe recognizes the sinister viz. of MORT, Rask's P.R.O., and chief executive of BOSS's Exterminator Group.

(Joe now continues his own story)

I SURFACED from a deep black pool of pain, spiraled up to consciousness with a woman's scream shrilling through my nut . . . *Jane!* They'd gotten her too! My eyes snapped open: memory sparking back . . . the Bobby's night-stick smashing on my noggin, the zombie grin of Mort as he watched the cosh connect . . .

He sat facing me, out of phoney uniform now: insulated in his black slay-suit, slitted orbs icy as the polar breath that could spray from the cryogen gun held loose in his gloved mitt. "Stay static, bud," the thin voice warned, dead-lipped.

"Jane!" I hoarsed. The screams had quit. "What have you done with her, you rotten jerk!"

"No cause to miff, bud—the Prex is just putting her through the quiz routine." Mort showed his sharp, filed denture. "But boy, what a dish! That femme sure rates a rave from me."

"The Prex!" Behind these dialog exes, my mind was fast seeking an out. Rask here—in Britain? My glance zipped round the decor. Chrome walls, the monogram K.R. woven in the crimson carpet—the room was replicated from Rask's Central Office in N.Y. City!

"London Branch," Mort apprised me. "Maybe the Prex'll upgrade me to Veepee for snatching you—I could sure use some promotion!"

A door opened behind me. I

sniffed the odor of a menthol cigaret and knew that Rask had entered before his powerful bulk straddled over me.

"Lover's meetings, Rask," I ad-libbed, grinning through swollen lips.

"On your feet, Doax!" The technocrat was in no kidding mood. "Where's the Source-Book? Spill it fast, or . . ." his granite jaw jutted as he throatied the threat, ". . . I'll throw your Jane to Mort, by BOSS I will!"

"What an assignment!" Mort jiggled in delight, jiving a finger. "Oh Prex, give me that!"

"Quit clowning!" Rask rasped. "And wipe his face—you know I detest the sight of blood."

"What you say, Prex!" Mort hopped to the command. "And don't try no trix, bud. Mort's short

for mortician, see—and you'd make a clicko cadaver!"

"Mort could be short for mortal too!" a new voice clipped in suddenly from behind—it was Kennedy's! Mort snarled, swiveling the cry-gun . . . but before he could trigger, a blast of heat seared past me and the weapon buckled, melted in his mitt. "Jump clear, Doax!" Kennedy sharpened; and as I rolled beneath the desk, Mort shrieked once and dissolved into eternity, leaving a grease-stain like gasoline on the carpet.

Kennedy stepped into my vision-line, his liquidator leveled at the shrinking Prex. "One move and you join him, Rask!" the sci. sleuth grimmed, stamping out the menthol cig as it fell from the tycoon's slack lips.

But in a second Rask had gotten



"Take your leg out of my dog's mouth, you monster!"

his nerve back. "You can't kill me, Kennedy!" Lucifer pride overspread his jowled Musso-mask. "I'm immortal—authored same as you!"

"A fictive heavy come to life!" I gasped, getting to my feet.

Kennedy nodded curtly. "As I guessed. Rask, you can be liquidated only by your fictional creator's will—that right?"

"Correct!" confirmed the Cartel Chief. "And you don't know who he is—or my *novel* name!"

Tensed as I was to their dialog, I didn't heed the door opening or turn until the throistle voice called

my name . . . It was Jane, copper coif sweeping to her shapely bronze shoulders, emerald eyes smiling glamorous welcome . . . in another sec, choky with joy, I'd clasped my favourite fem to my chest.

But Kennedy was speaking: "No time for necking, kids—if the Cosmucar's on sked we'll be tee-ing off in precisely two minutes from now."

"Cosmucar?" I clutched my distaff Friday closer—nothing, I swore, would in-between us now.

"Jules Verne's *Clipper of the*

Clouds, Model 2003!" Kennedy whirled on the would-be world Czar. "Where *you* will be judged by the Immortal Tribunal—one of whom created, and will recognize, you—when we land on Planet Neo!"

The technocrat, cinder-pale, was less than king-size now.

"But your secret's out already, Rask!" Kennedy climaxed. "As the initials of your combine proclaim, you stand upshown as a time-projection of the BOSS, reactionary tribal chief from H. G. Wells's *Things to Come*!"

(to be discontinued)



Ballade of Broken Promises

("Robin Starveling, you must play Thisbe's mother")

AS I lay musing on a winter night
Of this or that impracticable scheme
I had a sudden vision clear and bright
Of high midsummer, and midsummer's dream,
And I recalled that old Athenian team
Of rustic actors, in whose hair was hay,
Distributing their parts, and (though the play
Forgets to mention it) methought one loon
Opposed his final casting with a "Nay"
When Starveling heard that he must have the moon.

For he was Thisbe's mother. And what light
From that poor voiceless orb of clotted cream
Could match the semblance of a mother's plight—
The soft solicitude, the grief extreme
That might have raised him in the Duke's esteem
When Thisbe's eaten? Could the moon allay
The fears for Thisbe's corse in disarray
Above whose mangled bones he meant to croon?
Long hours meseemed that Starveling staunch did stay
When Starveling heard that he must have the moon.

For Snout and Snug essayed with all their might
And Flute's small voice was added to the stream
Yet still the malcontent maintained his right
To mournful motherhood, till it did seem
The trembling brake re-echoed with his scream
"The dog, the bush, the lantern, what are they
Compared to that dear matron? Keep her, pray
Restore the past. Give back my promised boon."
It needed all the powers of Bottom's bray
When Starveling heard that he must have the moon.

Quince, there is very little more to say
Especially as rhymes run out so soon,
Except that actors always act this way
And thus, I think, it happened on that day
When Starveling heard that he must have the moon.

EVOE



IN most New York apartments you will observe that part of a window has been taken out and a machine with two knobs (resembling an attenuated radio) has been inserted. You are breathing by courtesy of this very air-conditioner which both brings air in to the central-heated atmosphere and keeps noise out.

A typical New Yorker will live in his apartment for an entire winter without once opening a window, his auditory contact with the outside world of sirens, bells, and hooters thus soothingly muffled. Evenings he returns from the office, his telephone ear ringing, his buzzer finger aching, his head splitting, dying for a drink. The sterile air in the apartment sizzles. The air-conditioner hums soothingly like some invisible equatorial bird, and the refrigerator is full of ice. As he sips his bourbon on the rocks, the New Yorker relaxes, waiting like a throbbing engine for the telephone to ring.

Heat comes before air-conditioning—crawling, relentless, piped steam heat, curling beneath the streets, climbing storey after storey, rattling the iron pipes in all the skyscrapers, pressing onwards, upwards, to this room here, this one with the fashionably dark-toned walls, and the white-painted furniture, and the blessed air-conditioner humming tirelessly. The steam heat saturates the air so that, heavy and motionless, it crouches on the skin like a vast amorphous toad, drawing sweat till the New Yorker pants for the tinkling ice rocks of another bourbon and water.

Steam Heat

BY WOLF MANKOWITZ

The heat, piped along the streets, brings protection from snow and ice, the sudden fury of the blizzard, with its bitter violent wind stripping the striped awnings, freezing everything except the red-hot pipes. Energy and capital have constructed this protective barrier against the cold war of winter. At night, as the air begins to freeze, vents in the New York streets breathe out heavily like grids over imminent hell. The empty roads steam as clammy life pipes through to a million airless rooms.

Certainly the heat has disadvantages. It is hard to control; on the coldest night it may be necessary to strip your shirt off in the apartment. The seams in the floor open. Furniture cracks and comes apart (antique furniture falls to pieces), but the cold is defeated, though not the common cold. That flourishes in the saturated atmosphere, and new "bugs" are discovered by disconsolate cliff-dwellers who cannot believe that they, who have conquered the greater enemy

absolutely, have been defeated by the simple cold. As the long New York day sniffs to its winter end it leaves behind a trail of handkerchief tissues as long as the city's protective pipe line.

Yet all this is a most encouraging example of consumer goods consumed; for, observe, the steam heat which increases the New Yorker's liability to colds in the head, confines him to his steam-heated apartment, where he watches in the even warmth (which is the best cure for colds) a television programme coming to him by courtesy of the manufacturers of the handkerchief tissues, without which (unfortunately) no New York girl's handbag is quite complete.

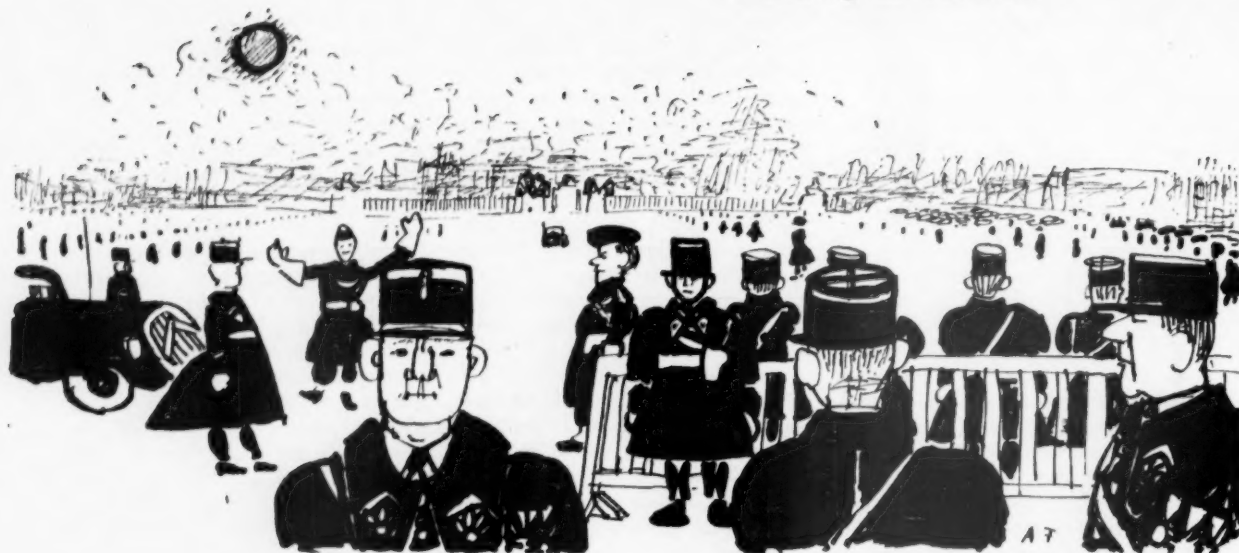
"Sir Miles predicted that the time was not far distant when we should be able to fly to Tokio in two hoops—one from London to Vancouver, and the second from there to Tokio."

Manchester Guardian

Steady as you bowl us on to the tarmac.



"I'll just take the free detachable knitting booklet."

Balloting at Versailles**Top-Hat Coronation**

BY ANDRÉ FRANÇOIS

ACTUALLY the Château de Versailles was hidden by the fog. One could hardly guess the Grille d'Honneur with the Tricolors. You could not enter in the big empty space in front of it because the white barriers and the black uniforms. I have not been at Versailles for a long time and could not remember the Château so I entered in a Postcard-shop. La dame was very sorry but she only had one postcard left with the Petit-Trianon on it.

There is terrible racket going on with the postcards, **THEY** have posted forty-five-thousand from the inside of the Château yesterday, because of the philatelists and the special **CACHET** they put on them in the Congrès, you know.

Now who do you think will be Président? Monsieur Beedaw or rather Netjailenn? You don't know? I am only frightened of the women. Yes I know Monsieur Netjailenn is not a woman, you understand, I mean **THEIR** women. I mean it is very important that **SHE** la femme du Président should be a peacefull woman, quiet I mean. Yesterday just before the Election started, there was a young English boy with red hair and pink cheeks, he said he is returning back to England. You are not waiting to look at the Election? No it can not be as beautiful as coronation he said. Now you see Monsieur I am only frightened from the Women.

I thought I better try to have some lunch. Looking for the lunch I met Monsieur Ferdinand Lop. Monsieur Lop is always Candidat. He used to be Candidat. I



first met Monsieur Lop in the quartier latin long before the war. He wanted to become a Député, his Programme was: to make the Rue Cujas reach the sea at both ends, to give a cigar with every Underground ticket which is sold, Monsieur Lop is not quite sérieux.

I thought a Choucroute Garnie would do me a lot of good and I entered in the CHAPEAU GRIS. The CHAPEAU GRIS was fondé under Louis XIV but redecorated recently. In front of me there was sitting a Lady with a black hat and her back turned to me she was eating and speaking to the lady in the grey hat with things on it. Now look at Henri is not he looking exactly like Monsieur Beedaw.

Henri was dropped in the Sauce Tartare, I mean his photography which the lady with the black-hat pulled out of her sac à main. Henri's face was washed by the Garçon with hot water and he thought si ce n'est pas indiscret that he looked exactly like Monsieur Beedaw, but you see he has no chances at all. A very low black dog pushed the door and walked into the kitchen through the CHAPEAU GRIS, he was followed by a big hairy dog with brown dots on it. They are coming for the rests and want go before half past two.

The lady with the black hat undeed a paquet and showed a big Teddy bear she bought, for Henri's daughter. I could not hear whom he was looking like, but the grey-hat-lady told he was exactly like him. A part the ladys and two other dogs from the neibers who passed through the Restaurant it was quite tranquille, but there



was an awful noice on the first floor. Deuxième Tour, Troisième Tour, Scrutin they shouted, and then they came down from LA SALLE DU PREMIER.

They were helped by la dame du vestiaire in their thick black overcoats, most of them smoked a cigar. They looked like the people who is allowed inside the CHATEAU. In fact I think they were Députés. The ladys thought so too.

A Versailles Tram nearly run me over, they look like matchboxes with one match sticking out from the box. On the match sticking out there was a little Tricolor-flag attached. Childrens were crying because their Ballon was flying away. In the sidestreets Civils and Militaires looked in the Television-shop window. You could see what was going on inside the CHATEAU. A Militaire told it was a marvellous invention to see it inspite the fog. Monsieur Lannyell had more voices than in the preceding tour but there will be another tour tomorrow. All this is actually more serious than you might think.



Vive le Président

(France, Republic of)

EENY, meeny, miney, mo
 Nine were in, with eight to go.
 O U T spells O U T. Or is it I N?
 How could they end, if they couldn't begin?
 It seems that Liberty, Fraternity and Equality
 Have the oddest effects on a nation's polity.

LAWRENCE BENEDICT

"Twinkle, Twinkle"

BY NESTA PAIN

IN an inflated moment of my career I conceived the ambition of recording the Milky Way. It seemed a trifle familiar, but the project was, I was told, perfectly feasible, and I rang up the eminent scientist who was able to perform this miracle for me.

"Record the Milky Way?" he said. "Yes, of course. Whenever you like."

"Thank you," I said, trying to sound as though this was the sort of thing I arranged every day. "Some time next week, perhaps?"

"Oh." He paused. "Well, there is one difficulty, as a matter of fact," he went on. "The sun's a bit noisy at the moment."

"Noisy?" I exclaimed. "The sun?"

"Yes," he said conversationally. "It's been *very* noisy the last week or two."

I felt rather at a loss.

"Is the sun often noisy?" I inquired.

"Oh no!" he said, sounding a trifle shocked at the suggestion. "The sun's very quiet as a rule."

We made an appointment to

record the Milky Way the following week, sun permitting, but it was no good pretending that the whole thing hadn't come as rather a shock to me. A previous generation sustained the disillusionment of learning that the sun's face is spotty. Noisy habits into the bargain seemed a bit excessive.

However, the sun remained admirably quiet on the appointed day and the Milky Way was duly recorded. Regarded as the music of the spheres, it was something of a disappointment—although it appeared to inspire the most romantic fancies in various suggestible people who listened to it afterwards. It was, in fact, plain *noise*—a dull monotonous roar. "Undifferentiated radio waves," I was told. The engineers said cynically that they could produce a noise like that for me any time I wanted it without going to all the trouble of making any special expeditions. They appeared to think that I had wasted their time.

However, the scientists told me (although I have only their word for it) that it did indeed come from the Milky Way and that the waves

producing it must have set out at the time of the Ice Age in order to reach us now. This was a romantic thought, but the point of origin of the waves was rather less romantic, for it was believed that they did not emanate from any of the visible stars.

"It's possible," said the eminent scientist, "that they come from the dust."

"Dust?" I said scandalized. "What dust?"

"Oh, space is full of dust," he replied.

Dust and noise. It seems that space travel will carry us through surroundings little different from the heart of London, and the destinations, as described by the scientific authorities, seem scarcely worth the journey.

The moon is the obvious first port of call—a mere hop of a hundred days at a hundred miles an hour—but the fact that it has no atmosphere seems a disadvantage. The temperature, too, might be on the trying side, since it varies from well above the boiling point of water at midday to one hundred and fifty degrees below freezing point at night. A



change is as good as a rest, they say, but there's no point in overdoing things. The only attraction appears to lie in the fact that if you can drive a golf ball one hundred and fifty yards on earth you will be able to drive it half a mile on the moon. Though a keen golfer myself, I cannot feel it is a sufficient reason for the journey.

Jupiter, coated in thick ice and with an atmosphere compounded of ammonia and marsh gas, can be dismissed at once as a holiday resort. Certainly it will have no attraction for slimmers, for if you weigh thirteen stone on earth you will weigh thirty-four on Jupiter and run the risk of collapsing under your own weight. Venus, shrouded in perpetual smog, is little better. Its surface, hotter than boiling water, is swept by continual gales, cyclones and tornadoes, and even if the scenery were worth looking at (which apparently it is not) it would be impossible to see it, since all is perpetually hidden in yellow gloom. As for the atmosphere, it is unlikely that even the most optimistic travel folders would describe it as salubrious, since it is thought to consist of formaldehyde.

But Mars, of course, is the darling of the space travellers, and after a glance at the qualifications of the other planets its amenities do seem almost inviting. It has an atmosphere—though not very much of one, it is true—which is not actively poisonous and might even support life. It is cold—a night temperature of one hundred and thirty degrees below zero can hardly be described as anything else—but scientists say that it might be possible to survive it by taking refuge in caves. But why try? Is it *really* so much better than earth that we should strive so hard to get there? The only positive attraction offered seems to consist of "vegetable life in the form of lichens and moss." I'd just as soon have a brussels sprout.

If travel, then, we must into



"My stick insects haven't been themselves for some time."

space, it might be better to think of booking to some destination outside the solar system. The trouble there, of course, is the length of the journey. As one scientist remarked of prospective travellers to these very far parts: "It is to be hoped that they will remember to take their wives; for it is their grandchildren who will arrive."

Farewell to Pantomime

THERE were three worlds behind my pantomime,

And even then I found the difference clear.

One was the world of fairy-tale and rhyme,

Conceptual, full of symbols and austere;

And one upon the stage, which lamps illuminated

And my uncritical senses glorified;

And one the sharp unquestionable world that waited

In the grey light outside.

The stage-world should have kindled and set free

Familiar images in childish hearts,

And sympathetic parents longed to see

Ungarbled Grimm, and men in the men's parts,

And less irrelevant song. All this admitting,

My super-ego smiled at what I saw.

But in the deeper gloom my dark young ego sitting

Absorbed it in the raw.

I knew the story, but it did not matter

Because of the lit show's exuberance.

Even the blue jokes and the slap-stick patter

Half-harbingered half-understood romance.

And those great legs that graced Prince Charming lent

Immense, mundane importance to the show:

Lord, how I loved those legs and all I thought they meant

Thirty-odd years ago.

The stage world kindled the grey world outside

To some strange summer on the real world's rim.

The less like Grimm it grew, the more it cried

Of something much more magical than Grimm.

This world, that hardly ventured at pretence,

Somewhere ran into the sane world I knew.

Silly, inconsequential, crude to every physical sense,

I knew it to be true.

But how connect with any known existence

Grimm on dry ice, elaborately concealed

By flying figures seen at a vast distance

Sweeping a flood-lit frozen football-field,

With hollow voices dropping from a height

Upon the mouthing mobile shapes in view?

All this is merely magic and a child at sight

Knows that it is not true.

Only an eyeless generation will

Re-heat the husk that holds the germ of truth.

It was an instinct older than DeMille

That knew that pantomime was fit for youth.

A child must see a world within its reach

To have the vision proper to its age,

Something life-size, ludicrous, speaking human speech,

Upon a wooden stage.

P. M. HUBBARD

Dodge Castle (Stately Home Ltd.)

JUSTIN RICHARDSON

Annual General Meeting



THE Fifth Annual General Meeting was held on December 28 at Dodge Castle. Present: Lord Dodge (Chairman), Lady Dodge, the Hon. Rupert Dodge, the Hon. Lavinia Dodge. The Chairman said:

The Accounts for the year ended November 30 last disclose the most gratifying Net Loss of no less than £5,678, nearly £3,000 more than our previous record. The Loss is, of course, carried forward to our Parent Company, MYSELF (1948) Ltd., which it will virtually free from liability for Income or Sur-tax this year—and how many parents can say the like?

This resounding success is, as you know, due to our revolutionary new system, TOTAL STATELI-NESS (Pro. Pat.), marketed under the trade-name "See Gracious Living Lived" (Regd.). A word on the historical background and future

development of this great invention will not be amiss.

I would remind you that our early trading was marked by an almost criminal naïveté. Receipts were confined to an "all-in" half-crown charge for viewing the *whole* of the Castle, not one penny extra being asked for such priceless assets as Queen Elizabeth's Dormy or Bloody Mary's Boudoir, to name but two. Advertising was impersonal and even grammatical. Tips were unsolicited and, worse, unpooled. Small wonder that our takings were modest and that, in consequence, even those paltry expenses which we put forward—the butler, three maids, a gardener, a couple of new carpets—were whittled down by the Revenue almost to actual cost. As a result, our first year's operations ended in a profit, which dogs the finances of the Company to this day.

The lessons of this set-back were, however, quickly learnt. A tour of our competitors' units was made, and their best methods adopted and

improved upon. Extra charges were at once imposed for each extra attraction. Where such did not exist they were promptly created. Ye Moate Two Shilling Carre Parke, Ye Dungeon Lovers'-Lounge and Ye Haunted Lav. date from this time. Antiques were liberally hired, bygones actually bought. A most important extension was Ye Tilt-Yarde Teas, enabling us to include the upkeep of the stables in our costs. Advertising played its full part, souped-up pictures of my wife and daughter, under the now famous slogan "Dodge Castle—the STATE-LIER Home!" creating widespread wonderment.

The success of these measures was weighty but one-sided. Receipts rose by leaps and bounds, *but without a proportionate rise in expenses*. True, our domestic wages, repairs, heating, lighting and so on were now being absorbed, but the main bulk of our living-costs—food and drink, clothes, hunting, shooting and fishing—was still being paid for out



Shelwell

"Coming in the sweep, Charlie?"

of your Chairman's own taxed income.

However, a lucky accident now occurred, and pointed the way to our present—I trust permanent—prosperity. One day, my wife inadvertently left, on King Richard's Chaise-longue, the corsets she burst at King George's Coronation! Who will ever forget the vast queues that formed to inspect what they obviously considered our star exhibit, entirely undeterred by the extra shilling so promptly imposed! There and then was born the concept of TOTAL STATELINESS (Pro. Pat.), stemming from the instant perception that *personal* exhibits could not only draw the Big Penny but could cover *personal* expenses. For, if the public *paid* to handle a pair of corsets, the maintenance of such corsets *must* be chargeable against revenue! Total *personal* exploitation was thenceforward the clear goal.

Here let me say that the financial rewards of this policy have been at least equalled by the spiritual satisfaction of giving real pleasure to so many of our fellow-creatures and/or clients. The appreciation of our public as they watched the family at meals, as they crowded in upon Lavinia's hair-washing, helped Rupert to get back on his horse, or listened to my afternoon nap was obvious in their expressions, facial and otherwise. The happy click of cameras has accompanied our venture of Family Prayers, gay faces have popped up over my morning *Times*. Even our little quarrels—and what family has none!—have, it seems, been a great draw; so that a long series of tiffs, especially those involving an interchange of soft fruit, is scheduled in next year's Plan.

To return, however, to matters material. The success of TOTAL STATELINESS (Pro. Pat.) remained quite uncertain until its fiscal watertightness could be proved. I am happy to tell you that the Revenue Authorities have just agreed that, as "*See Gracious Living Lived*" (Regd.) is the source of the Company's income, *the full costs of such living are properly chargeable as expenses of the business*. This ruling extends to all gracious Raw Material (Occupational Clothing,

Cosmetics, Glossy Papers, etc.), to gracious Labour (Personal Maids, Grooms, etc.) as well as to gracious Welfare Services (South of France, Polo, Clubs, etc.): an objection about gracious Food and (especially) Drink was overcome by citing the precedent of Pablo's Performing Seals Ltd., whose personnel also took their meals in public, thus providing an incontestable analogy with ourselves.

A word about the future. The business is on a sound loss-making basis, expenses are rising, and the extension of our opening hours to allow Gracious Living Lived (Regd.) to be *seen* "From Bath to Bed" (Trade Mark) should add considerably to next season's turnover. Prospects, in fact, are splendid; and further plans are on the drawing-board. Of these I can reveal no more than five highly confidential, five necessarily cryptic, words—"The Statelier Home—ON ICE!"

The Report and Accounts were adapted.

Melbourne, Monday.—Cocktail parties are one of the biggest headaches for security officers, said Major-General A. C. Shortt, former director of Military Intelligence, here to-day.

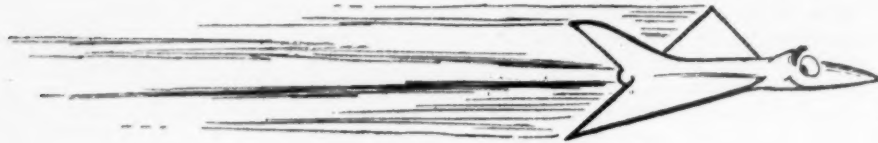
Evening Standard

That's no leakage, anyway.

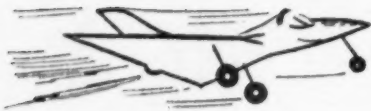


"You'll find it's already stirred."

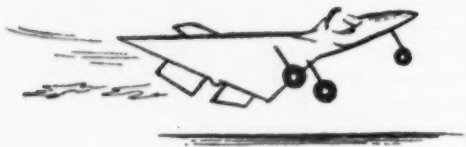
What a superb example of man's inventive genius the modern military aircraft is—



—especially when it comes in to land.



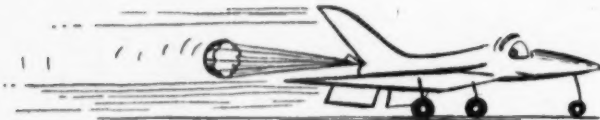
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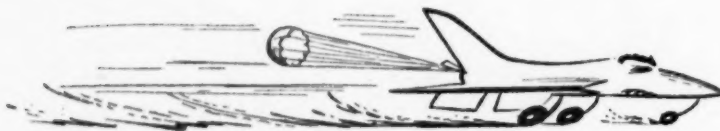
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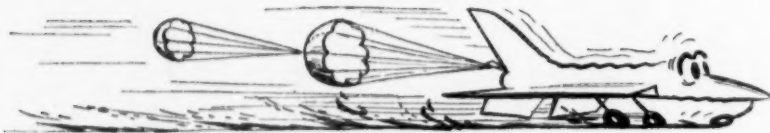
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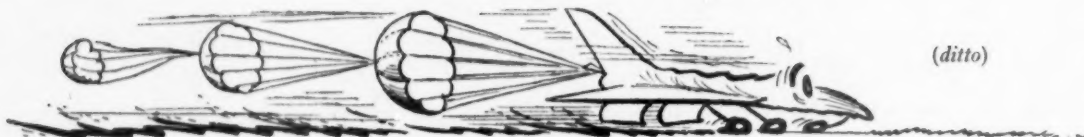
(braking parachute out)



(brakes on)



(brakes on,
more 'chutes out)



(ditto)

Prosperous New Year, Mr. Parchway

BY J. B. BOOTHROYD

NO doubt it was the fading wisps of good will in the air that turned my thoughts on him—and there, oddly enough, he was; standing on the pavement below my traffic-logged bus, carrying two good quality attaché-cases and talking to a fat man in a heavy overcoat. He looked as scrubbed and neat as ever, and I wondered once more, as I had wondered so often, how he used to spare me his soap coupons in the bad old days.

It had started with the divan, of course. The soap, like everything else, came later. It was at a time that divans couldn't be had, remember? They'd all been sent to Russia. All but one. That one had been given to Mrs. Parchway on the very day before I met her husband—most providential, the whole thing. She, it seems, had been wondering how on earth to get rid of the thing, and I came along at the crucial moment. I had to collect it from the corner of Wormwood Street, City. I don't know how Mr. Parchway got it there, and it was none of my business. I know that when he muttered the words "Thirty-two"—he never paraded his philanthropy, but did good by stealth—I was a bit surprised, until I found the parcel, which later proved to be a ham, tied to the underside of the mattress.

It seemed, when I referred to this at our next meeting (a friend had given him a small refrigerator which he had no use for), that he had been killing a pig. Neither he nor Mrs. Parchway, he gave me to understand, were in the least keen on ham, bacon, or anything of that kind. In fact it gradually became a mystery to me what the Parchways did live on. They didn't drink tea, certainly. If they did, it was only in the most abstemious quantities, and then without sugar. Nor were they given

to sartorial extravagance in any way. I imagine that Mr. Parchway must have spent prodigally on pressing and cleaning, otherwise he could scarcely have maintained his spruce appearance and yet suffer from a permanent and unwelcome surplus of clothing coupons.

Not only were Mr. Parchway and his wife of a most moderate and ascetic persuasion (I was impelled to put a question, out of sheer curiosity, one week when he called at my office with four parcels running) but they enjoyed a wide circle of dyspeptic, liverish and otherwise easily indisposed friends, to whom the very mention of cooking-fat, bananas, dried milk, fruit-cake, canned pineapple chunks, pork sausages and the like was perfectly nauseating. Delicacies of this kind, according to Mr. Parchway, simply couldn't be got out of their houses quick enough; even the grease-proof wrapper of a slab of National Butter gave them a queasy feeling. "Yet," as Mr. Parchway often said, after panting into my room and commenting lightly on Monty's progress in the Western Desert—"it would be a crime to waste the stuff."

A teetotaler from birth, Mr. Parchway was repeatedly placed in a position of embarrassment by his local wine and spirit dealer. How it happened never emerged, but it seemed that owing to some obtuseness on the part of this merchant, periodical deliveries of strong drink were made at Mr. Parchway's address. Awkward as these goods were to wrap, and to carry up my office stairs, he never despaired in his task of keeping his cellars clear of the stuff, and preventing bottles of gin, whisky and rum from becoming an actual nuisance about the house. To assist was the least that I could do.

However, it is difficult, as none knows better than I, to sustain

unflagging altruism indefinitely. Mr. Parchway, a man of unswerving character, would have kept it up longer, but in time I began to tire. Selfishness broke in. After assisting him for some years to combat the consequences of his multifarious allergies I began to lose patience. It was up to him, I felt, to stand on his own feet now, and dispose of his cheese, golf balls, stockings and chump chops on his own initiative. Things slackened off. Periodically, for old time's sake, I would relieve him of a length of curtaining material or a new and unwanted motor-tyre, but the time came at last when we met no more.

It is because I have always felt a twinge of shame over my behaviour that I was so glad to see him, there on the pavement by London Bridge, looking as prosperous as ever, despite what must have become increasingly hard times. For a moment, I confess, the two attaché-cases had me worried; I feared that he might have been degraded to a mere outside porter. But just as my bus moved off I looked again and he was walking away empty-handed, while the fat man was carrying the attaché-cases trippingly down the steps by the south side of Southwark Cathedral. So that was all right.

I must say, I've had another pang of curiosity about the attaché-cases since. There are so few outlets for Mr. Parchway's benevolence nowadays. But it's just possible, of course, that he and his friends are getting more uranium than they know what to do with at the moment.

"Instituto de Espana, 102, Eaton Square, S.W.1. Lecture by W. L. Hild-
(sophs qim) sdnmy usndy, "qurp
on Friday, Oct. 30, at 6 p.m."

Spectator

Sorry. Hitch with the magic lantern.



The Medall.

A SATYRE AGAINST PARTITION

By the Authour of *Abalom* and *Achitophel*.

When the Debate is ended in the Parliament they shout in a loud voice "Who Goes Home?" One day there was an ill-conditioned Polander who cried out "All the world except the Poles." For he remembered that King David had said of the Poles that they were "decent but feeble" folk because they longed again to see the Vineyards of their own Land where they had once dwelt and which had been promised to them.

LONG years ago, ere men had learnt to think,
Before they'd even missed the Missing Link,
They had a Custom, quaint and half absurd,
That those who gave should also keep their Word.

There's been, since Time began, some Chosen Race—
Dosed with a special Dose of Guts and Grace—
This Race or that, but always self-appointed,
Self-praised, self-pricked, self-primed and self-anointed.
For that's the only way to do the chusing.
God's Vicars never have been good at losing.
Hence 'tis the Lot is always apt to fall
Upon the self-same Tribe that makes the Call.

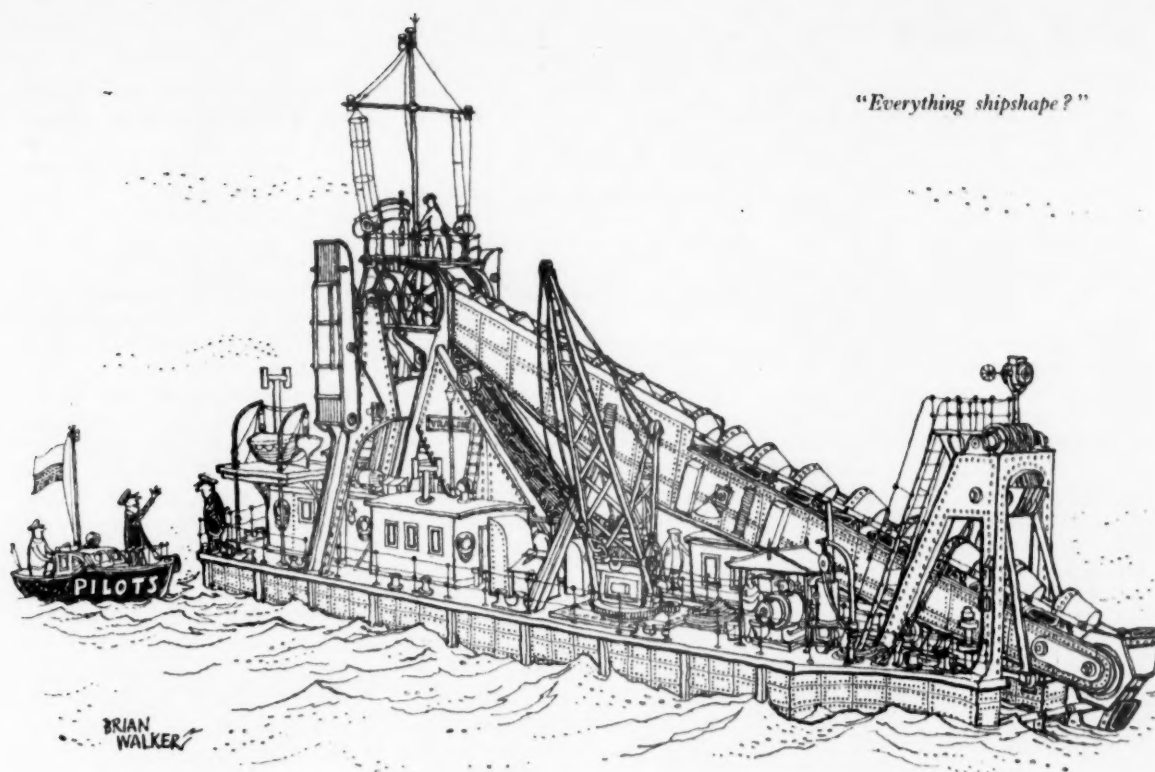


"... and I'll de-frost the Christmas tree."

Our sad and latter Times, alas, revealed,
Two Rival God Almightyies in the field.
Since of all Tyrannies on Human Kind,
The worst is that which persecutes the Mind,
The Russian Bear the first staked out his claim
To kill the People in the People's name.
The Teuton fury was the next example.
He gobbled Austria as a testing Sample,
Bohemia next, and then—there's no retreating—
The Appetite must always grow in eating.
The bloody Boar, that Independent Beast,
Was not a Gentleman, to say the least.
"Alas, how shocking," cried the Quaking Hare,
Professed neutrality, but left it there.
The Polander stood firm. Since thus alone
The Teuton Power, inordinately grown,
Could be contained, we gave our Warantee
That, come what might, the Pole should still be free.
Then burst the Storm. The unconsidered Poles,
Bombed, hunted, tortured, starved and shot by Shoals,
Fought on for Freedom, trusting those who spoke,
Until at last the Teuton Fury broke.

Democracy is now the common Note.
Do what you will—so long as there's a Vote.
It means one thing in Moscow, one in Rome,
A third in Sudan and a fourth at home.
What matters right or wrong in the event
So long as there's a People's Government?
Results, they say, may be a trifle droll,
And yet it works quite well upon the whole.
What if Barabbas sometimes heads the Poll?
Th' Americans believed it axiomatic
That Russians were most truly democratic.
It turned out afterwards it wasn't so.
But at the time, i' faith, how could they know?

Though, thus required by pure, good husbandry,
So many Poles have quite refused to die—
Have kept indeed an obstinate, unforgiving,
Fanatick Faith that they will go on living.
They kept their Faith, and idiotly, averred
That we had given and should keep our Word.
Of all the strange Devices of the Town
That either Fairs or Parliaments have shown,
The Polish Medall bears the prize alone.
Resurgam is its Motto—they imply
By that that they do not propose to die.
They have some Story there was once a Man
Who died and rose again, and think they can
Rise likewise from their Death—fond, foolish Plan!



"Everything shipshape?"

It's true, of course, we had some time before
Proclaimed to the waiting World our Freedoms Four,
Four Freedoms with their solemn Warantee
That for all men Religion should be free—
All men of course what ever Class or Hue
Except for those who really think it True.

As for the Poles, those Decent, Feeble Men,
We did not wish to see them rise again.
They should (we thought with the American)
Be democratic on the Russian Plan,
And surely no one ought to make a Fuss
At being liberated by a Russ.
(If it weren't them, who knows, it might be Us.)
And so we thought it better not to alter
What went awry at Teheran and Yalta.

If Russ or German either one attack't,
They should be stopped by a Locarno Pact.
The trouble was, with Poland in between,
'Twere hard to see what such a Pact could mean,
And hard to see what point there was to make it.
Why, could we even find a way to break it?
So, though the Poles could not quite rise again,
They'd have no Reason rightly to complain.
What though the Moon's Dark Side they still must see?
It isn't everybody can be free.
What though full Freedom's Sun may not shine bright?
We'll guarantee them as a Satellite.

David, whose Name all generations tell,
Then reigned majestic in *Israel*,
Like Cato, gave his Smile to his In-laws,
Who sat attentive to their own applause.
To Absalom as well prepared to soften
(Though Absalom had hanged himself so often)
King David, with high Thoughts, exposed his Plan
To meet the Philistine, as Man to Man.
The reverend Senate, though forbid to cheer,
Greeted the Project with subdued Hear, Hear.

But little Adriel, on the 'tother side,
Tried hard to turn and twist, but only tried.
Chief of a motley Band of this and that,
Clamant for heady Draughts of Gospel Vat,
If they must drink, himself would then drink first,
As if he gave 'em leave to quench their Thirst.
Indeed what else was there for him to do
With Boars and Hares and all the curious Crew,
Magog and Gog, all this and Evan, too?
For Evan and his Tribunes much feared lest
The comfortable Living of the West
Might fall in Comfort, if rash Hands went prying
Into the East's uncomfortable Dying.

So 'mid the plaudits of the Whole Combine
The God-like David spake the Grand Design.
To the still-vexed Bermoothes bore the Plan,
Air-born alighting at Mid Ocean.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

Best Seller

BY RICHARD MALLET

FIRST the blurb, making it clear that this isn't fiction: no, you don't have to use your imagination, it's all described; no, however strange it seems, you needn't worry about being laughed at for believing it, it's quite genuine, here's the man's photograph; no, you're not wasting your time on mere entertainment, these are facts—*educational*. A real book, a *thick non-fiction* book, such as the librarian will approve of you for borrowing, such as will earn you respectful glances when you read it in the train. You won't be called on to expose your ignorance on the question of its literary merit. Whether it's abominably or beautifully written, all they'll say is What's it about? and you'll know—what a relief—you'll know.

It seems that this man, who is a surgeon—oo!—and his plucky young wife, who is a dashing foreign correspondent, and their two charming dogs, Whimsy and Nausea, built their own small submarine and sailed single-handed along the uncharted ocean bed of the Burmese-African jungle to escape from a prison camp during the war, at the same time renovating their country cottage and deciding to leave the Communist Party. To prove it could be done (and to write a book about it afterwards).

The sun beat down, the brutal police beat up. All four, including the dogs, grew weak from lack of thirst. A mighty storm arose. Starboard the port marlinspike! Of course we couldn't have a real marlinspike, we'd made one out of a part-worn elephant-tusk. Ah, shall we ever forget dear old Stanislas, the secretly anti-Nazi elephant?

(Picture facing page 972. Notice the mischievous gleam in his eye.)

He was a noble beast who had joined the Party back in 1933, when we were all still full of ideals. It is hard, now, to recall the exact moment when disillusionment began. Was it when we were forbidden on orders from Moscow to call him Jumbo?

All the time the renovation of the cottage, the replanting of the garden went on. It may seem strange to you that there could be a cottage and a garden on board a submarine, but that's the idea: it's got to be strange; with non-fiction you're only interested when it's incredible. Fantastic sea-creatures undulated past the garden fence, and the surgeon had an enthralling fight with an octopus, using only his scalpel and one of the lesser-known barbiturates.

But there were narrow escapes. One day the heavy tread of the guard sounded just as we were about to submerge. What was to be done? Never shall I be sufficiently grateful for the brave girl's presence of mind. "Quick!" she cried. "Give me a lobelia!"

She had heard the guard talking about his lobelias. They always have a weak spot, these so-called supermen. "Well?" she challenged him. "Could you do better?" He went away to fetch one of his own, and, working feverishly, we had the submarine in another cell of the Party by the time he came back with it.

Meanwhile a steady stream of reminiscence from the surgeon. There was old Sir Y. X.'s operation, for instance; no, not, of course, as interesting as yours, but giving you an excuse to recall it. Also Y. X. is not his real name, though it may seem to have the ring of truth. If I mentioned his real name, one of the most echoing chancelleries of Europe might well reel across the political scene, shaken to at least one of its foundations.

Well, Sir Y. X. turned up at my surgery one day in a false beard, looking anxiously over his shoulder at the pursuing spies. "I don't know what's the matter with me, doctor," he said in muffled tones. "I even wake tired." "Why, Sir Y. X.," I said, "perhaps you don't realize that while you're asleep—" But even as I spoke the newsboys were running down the street, crying "Archduke Ferdinand assassinated at Sarajevo! All the winners!"

It was the end of an era. As we saw the white cliffs of British East Africa unfolding before our dropped anchor and planted our home-made flag on the summit, we knew that life would never be the same again.

And so we say farewell to the dreaded Writing Men of Non-Literary Non-Fiction. Shall we ever return? Only for the sequel. 750,000 sold before publication. Have you read it? Oh, you should, everybody else has. Crazier than fiction, easy to read, yet it's all true. *Educational*.

§ §

"British European Airways said last night: 'We expect a rush by people wanting to transfer from rail to air. The utmost we can do is put on 40 or 50 extra flights, which will be only a drop in the ocean.'"—*Daily Mail*

Walking, thanks.





BOOKING OFFICE

Lost Horizon

The Golden Horizon. Edited by Cyril Connolly. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 25/-

AS it happens, Mr. Cyril Connolly, on more than one occasion in the past, has taken me personally to task for neither contributing to *Horizon*, nor—under interrogation—showing adequate familiarity with its contents. My excuse—that these undoubted omissions were, in fact, due not so much to malice aforethought as pressure of work of one kind and another—was brushed aside; but now at last these deficiencies have produced at least the good result that I come unsated to this anthology.

The magazine appeared between Christmas 1939 and New Year 1950, half its dozen years of publication taking place during the greatest war of history: the succeeding period scarcely less coloured by war-time influences. There were advantages and disadvantages of such an epoch. The chief disadvantage was in the assembling of contributors. Many writers were involved in full-time war work; a few had gone to America; young men especially were not available. As against that, war is a season when people passionately desire to read. By the time the blitz had removed the bulk of publishers' stocks there was hardly a novel too obscure, or a critical work too prosy, to be snapped up eagerly from the bookstalls. An enormous community of people came into existence, bored and harassed in unfamiliar jobs, avid to spend such spare time as they possessed reading better things. For such Mr. Connolly leapt beneficently into the breach.

His introduction describes rules observed in selecting six hundred pages from the original ten thousand. Few will grumble at a decision to jettison philosophy, psychology, politics and economics, in favour of stories, poems, reportage, and literary essays. "I fall an easy victim to political quacks and neurotic journalists", Mr. Connolly modestly explains. "I am taken in by a fire in the belly . . ." It was also wise to

avoid the work, reprinted elsewhere, of well known writers. The present contents are grouped under five sections: *Horizon's* History of the War, Entertainments, Glimpses of Greatness, Personal Anthology, and Aspects of Literature.

The silver hairs among the gold of the older generation do not come well out of the selection. The pieces by H. G. Wells and Logan Pearsall



Smith could hardly be less distinguished, though the futilities of the former are heartily pulverized by George Orwell in the immediately following article. An all-time low for fatuity is scored by a Russian author, Alexei Tolstoy, in his reply to a message of friendly greetings to "Soviet writers" from Mr. Connolly and Mr. Stephen Spender (then co-editor), but it was rightly included to illustrate and record the imbecilities of that moment. On the whole the war section is perhaps the least satisfactory. Tinged with self-pity, the material, even when highly competent, is inevitably undigested. Mr. J. Maclaren-Ross's "This Mortal Coil," a grim little sketch, thoroughly hits off Army life; and Mr. Cecil Beaton brings something fresh to reportage in the pages from his "Libyan Diary."

Among the Entertainments, Mr. Maurice Richardson's "Way out in the Continuum," a glimpse of the future, provides one of his characteristic bursts of savage laughter ("as for drink, '16', who's of a statistical frame of mind, calculates that at a

little six-hour snack affair he drank two dozen bottles of old-fashioned claret, a firkin of Lunar Fungus Vino Fino, and a litre or so of the new Plutonic inorganic liqueur—radio-active but quite harmless"). Sig. Alberto Moravia's "Back to the Sea" depicts, adept as ever, in a few pages, unhappy married life against a background of barbed-wired sea coast.

The Prospect of Literature is a worthy though rather stodgy section, if the truth be known, except for Mr. Edouard Roditi's "Italo Svevo," an excellent survey of that too little read and ever interesting Triestine novelist. There is excellent stuff in Glimpses of Greatness. Denton Welch's visit to Sickert (whom he found with a *Punch* drawing pinned to his canvas) is possibly the most interesting item, because it shows the impact of an extremely talented little oddity on a great painter of another age. That Welch's life had been turned, while still young, to tragedy, and Sickert's career, for all its up and down, was one of enjoyment and success, gives a curious, unforgettable twist to the picture. V. Veresayev's "A Day with Tolstoy" (beginning cosily, "In 1902 I was deported from St. Petersburg . . ."), is an interesting, convincing account of the great novelist at close range. Princess Edmond de Polignac's "Memoirs," chiefly of musical society in Paris during the Proustian period, are thoroughly enjoyable.

Among the verse are Mr. John Betjeman's admirable lines, "A Subaltern's Love-Song" and "The Old Liberals." There is also an attractive poem by Mr. E. E. Cummings, author of that excellent book, *The Enormous Room*, whom we would like to hear more of in this country, beginning:

jake hates
all the girls (the
shy ones, the bold
ones; the meek
proud sloppy sleek)
all except the cold
ones

There are, of course, other good things too. In fact *Horizon* has some claims to be considered the most



remarkable highbrow paper produced since *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy*. Both of these would lack their superlative interest without the Beardsley drawings. Unlike these productions of the nineties, *Horizon* possessed no characteristic flavour of one particular set of writers and artists. Its nature was decided, more than most magazines, by editorial inclination. The anthology, therefore, gives vicariously a fascinating cross-section of Mr. Connolly's own vivid, uncertain, enthusiastic, humorous, irritable, romantic, and very individual mind.

ANTHONY POWELL

Apparitions. G. N. M. Tyrrell. *Duckworth*, 12/6

Old-fashioned readers who regard apparitions as the raw material of light fiction, like corpses, will be alarmed by the scientific approach of this very learned and intelligent essay. It is a re-examination of the narratives collected by the Society for Psychical Research and a criticism of the theories of the original editors. In brief, its thesis is that apparitions are constructed in the minds of the observers, not in space, and that they are telepathically originated.

Tyrrell was chiefly concerned to argue that his theory of apparitions threw light on the structure of the personality and, in particular, on the nature of the "mid-level processes" that play so large a part in paranormal phenomena. He believed that the collection of data and the statistical examination of such phenomena as telepathy and precognition had gone as far as it could without developments in theory, and it was towards a working hypothesis as a foundation for further research that he was groping in this study of visions of the absent.

R. G. G. P.

The Long Goodbye. Raymond Chandler. *Hamish Hamilton*, 10/6.

The present fashion for treating Raymond Chandler as if he were Henry James should not prevent us from acclaiming his very real merits. Fuelled by endless supplies of gin and rye whisky, *The Long Goodbye* zips along at immense speed, and its standard cast of nymphomaniacs, racketeers, sadistic policemen and tough millionaires are given unusual depth and vigour. For addicts of the old-style crossword-puzzle detective story there is a first-class surprise solution. There is also a good deal of radical social comment. ("Big money is big power, and big power gets used wrong. It's the system.")

What does it all add up to? One-third realism and two-thirds fantasy, with fantasy fully indulged in the impossibly virtuous, sentimental private eye Philip Marlowe, who keeps brushing away dirty money as if it were mud. Mr. Chandler's own virtues are a cunning artifice that is almost art, a power in ordering narrative, a terse style intelligently handled. Not Henry James, nor even Dashiell Hammett perhaps, but an uncommonly skilled creator of modern adventure stories, the best of his kind now writing.

J. S.

Dramatists of To-day. J. C. Trewin. *Staples*, 16/-.

If a visiting Martian had asked for information on the British theatre we could have lent him an avalanche of books on every aspect of it save one—our current dramatic authors, treated in a complete survey. Now at last this curious gap is filled, and no one could be better qualified to do it than Mr. Trewin, whose witty and sympathetic criticism is backed by formidable knowledge.

Apart from Shaw and Bridie, all his subjects are living. They range from Eliot to Ben Travers, and include the younger post-war dramatists of promise. Mr. Trewin is an enthusiast, who has never yet been infected by coterie-hysterics. He stands alertly in the middle of the path, less interested in what he calls "the drawn-thread-work of literary criticism" than in the effect of a play in the theatre. Addicts, both professional and amateur, will find this book adds greatly to the pleasure of their play-going.

E. O. D. K.

Somewhere a Voice is Calling. John Lodwick. *Heinemann*, 12/6

It seems to be a convention of reviewing to slobber Mr. Lodwick, sometimes for his own good, sometimes not. His new novel has worried several critics by being virtually sneer-proof. It is very readable and is far more crammed with material than the average modern novel, which has gone thin. I think it needs pruning, both in detail and by reducing the number of episodes—the reader is shown so much of the seamy side of post-war life on the Western Mediterranean, so many aspects of marriage, such a wide variety of local food and drink that, in the absence of some lower-toned interludes, he feels a bit battered. The raffish, consular hero, now flashing back to the love-hate of his dead first wife, now excavating in Minorca, now learning about currency smuggling, is lonely and violent, but not with the hysterical, unmuscular violence of so many modern heroes. At the heart of the novel is the problem of transforming violence into marriage.

R. G. G. P.

Factory Health, Safety and Welfare Encyclopædia. C. Conway Plumble. *National Trade Press*, 30/-.

There may still be a few business men who regard the Factory Acts as an unwarranted bureaucratic interference with the principles of *laissez-faire*, but in the vast majority of factories working conditions are far more safe, healthy and congenial than the prescribed minimum, for it is now realized that welfare and productivity are closely linked and that good industrial relations are impossible where the physical environment is unsatisfactory.

It is likely, therefore, that this admirable A.B.C. will be warmly welcomed by key personnel of British industry. Mr. Plumble, formerly H.M. Superintending Inspector of Factories, writes lucidly and employs as little as possible of the jargon inevitably associated with the subject. From the first entry ("Ablutions") to the last ("Young Persons") the information is presented with refreshing directness and clarity, and the system of cross-reference employed is so neat that

every subject can if necessary be "mugged up" without the usual paper-chase. A "must" for the office bookshelves.

A. B. H.

Mushrooms and Toadstools. A Study of the Activities of Fungi. John Ramsbottom. Collins: *The New Naturalist*, 30/-.

It has been suggested recently that modern agricultural methods may conceivably result in the field mushroom and its relative the horse mushroom following the truffle, once common in this country, into oblivion. It is, however, consoling to reflect that, even should such an eventuality occur, there would remain at least eighteen varieties of edible fungi classed as of good repute, ranging from the blewit, much esteemed in the Midlands, to the giant puff-ball, to whose excellent qualities the present reviewer can personally testify.

This is only one among countless items of information to be found in Dr. Ramsbottom's book, whose purview ranges over the whole field of fungoid growths from the mushroom proper to yeast, dry-rot and penicillin, and covers the historical and legendary as well as the purely scientific aspects of the subject. The book, which combines erudition and readability in an unusual degree, is beautifully, if sometimes terrifyingly, illustrated in colour and black-and-white from photographs by Mr. P. de Laszlo and others.

C. F. S.

A History of British Painting. Ernest Short. Eyre & Spottiswoode, 25/-.

Three hundred pages, dealing with nearly as many artists, from the earliest illuminators of religious manuscripts to a wide variety of living painters. After the religious era Mr. Short describes the work of the serjeant painters of the Middle Ages retained by the Court. He welcomes the influence on our culture of Rubens and Van Dyck, and deplores that its full effect was, at least temporarily, blighted by Cromwell. He traces the descent of the Royal Academy from Hogarth's School of Art in St. Martin's Lane, and describes the foundation of the National and the Dulwich Galleries, and other important public collections.

Mr. Short praises the work of such disparate artists as Rossetti, Leighton, Orchardson, Wilson Steer, Brangwyn and Mathew Smith. The rise and fall of the kingdoms of the art world is illustrated by the large Academy picture of the eighties, "Babylonian Marriage Market," by Edwin Long, purchased by a successful pill-maker for 6,300 guineas, and presented by him to the women's college of which he was "the memorable founder."

A. D.



AT THE PANTOMIME

Humpty Dumpty on Ice
(EMPIRE POOL, WEMBLEY)

THE Oriental gentleman who was my neighbour wanted to know how English pantomime, of which he had heard so much, had managed before the introduction of the fridge-floor. Quicker than I could tell him he exclaimed "Ah, ancient custom of panto of course, mothered on great frozen waters near eastern seaboard, yesno," and I felt it was kinder to leave him with this splendid picture of early theatrical enterprise on the Broads. But when he went on to admire the magnificence of the English physique, which enabled the skaters below us to belt round the rink like arrows and then sing with the clarity and volume of Tetrizzini, honesty compelled me to point out the real voices, busy at their mikes in a discreet corner.

This, that in iced entertainment you can hear every word of the lyrics, is a phenomenon in such striking contrast to the stage that I am sure the new form will not long be confined to pantomime. It never ceases to infuriate that, given clever lyrics, at least half of them are thrown away in the ground noises of the average musical. An ice rink is, in fact, a vast apron stage, full of rich possibilities for grouping, colour, and swift manoeuvre. There is a great chance for a courageous manager in an experiment

with first-rate music and lyrics, good skaters matched with good voices, and say Peter Brook or Tyrone Guthrie.

Of course the story would have to be fairly tenuous, as it is here with *Humpty Dumpty*. The fall of the egg and the hunt for the crown are springs enough, and the charm of the skaters' movements, their bright dresses and the beauty of the lighting effects soon lull our nagging little sense of plot. The largeness of the scale is exciting in itself, and although we see it all not in depth but in the round, illusion remains. There is something irresistible about a witch on skates. The opening of the royal toy cupboard, pouring out a ballet fifty-strong of rabbits, bears, dolls and soldiers, as well as a whole train which carries the Princess in triumph round the ice; the family of huge swans that tours the magic grotto; the village maypole; the skill of the leading performers, and the quick changes of mood between sinister and gay—all these are used with cunning by the producer, GERALD PALMER, and his choreographer, BEATRICE LIVESEY.

The plums in this synthetic cake are of excellent quality. GLORIA NORD and DAPHNE WALKER are both lovely skaters, and for comedy we have an able dame in ERIC WAITE, whose eccentric exhibition as Humpty's mother nearly stops the show. We have a band of inspired musical lunatics called CHOCOLATE & COMPANY, making the most of explosive instruments, a sound pair of slow-motion,



Princess Mirabelle—Miss GLORIA NORD

Martha—Mr. ERIC WAITE

poker-faced drolls, the MAXWELLS, and a hat-eating camel who browses his way through the audience.

But the biggest is a hydraulic plum, imported from Berlin. It consists of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of jets arranged in a long trough in front of a black back-cloth. Both for volume and angle these jets are controlled by a master hand, I suppose at some kind of keyboard. The results are extraordinary, something between water-fireworks and silent, visible music. At the start a few jets climb like rockets, to burst in a high cascade. Then other groups of jets join in, more gently, and as the theme grows the pattern swells and shifts until, like an animated scraperboard drawing, the whole backcloth becomes alive with a sparkling cross-hatching that picks up the colour of the lights and, though silent, seems to keep its central melody against the full grand crash of orchestration.

For this fantastic water-organ Mad Ludwig would gladly have given half the revenue of Bavaria.

Recommended

Two new straight plays at the top of the list—*A Question of Fact* (Piccadilly), and *A Day by the Sea* (Haymarket). Add the Oliviers in the Rattigan fairy tale, *The Sleeping Prince* (Phoenix), and for excitement *Witness for the Prosecution* (Winter Garden).

ERIC KEOWN



AT THE CIRCUS

BERTRAM MILLS (OLYMPIA)

ALWAYS ready to take wing to one of the unpronounceable places from which exciting new turns are commonly reported, the MILLS BROTHERS have not been idle. This year their chief novelty is to do with

horses—surprisingly, for one imagined that every permutation of these willing beasts had long since been discovered. Although in purists of *haute école* FREDY KNIE's Radio Horses may detonate an apoplexy, simpler minds will be moved to childlike wonder. From a central kiosk in which he shuts himself KNIE's amplified commands issue in a language unintelligible to me, but pregnant with meaning for eight better educated horses. At a word from the invisible maestro the number chosen by a borrowed little boy trots up to headquarters for a lump of sugar. Other brief orders set the party waltzing and performing all manner of cunning evolutions.

A second novelty is the rather thoughtful feat of the three ROGGE SISTERS, who propel themselves up a steep slope, walking barefoot on enormous rubber balls. To all the natural hazards with which Sisyphus was familiar is added a brute of a right-angled bend, negotiated triumphantly, though a slip by the leader would have thrown the family sharply into reverse. The anxiety exhibited by Father ROGGE, watching from the ground, seemed quite misplaced, and I feel the whole act would gain if he could bring himself to smile.

FATTINI is also a new original. In every circus there is always one who wins your heart immediately, and here for me it was this lamp-post king. Reeling back from a party in full evening dress, he sees a tremendous steel pole, almost roof-high, that would make a one-piece salmon rod for a giant. Up this he goes at a run until, as he reaches the lamp, the pole begins to sway. Farther and farther, slowly and terrifyingly; and the more hideous the motion the crazier grow FATTINI's antics on the top. Finally he comes down head first, braking somehow in the last few yards.

He is one of this year's Crick-in-the-Neck Brigade, but not so much so as either the IDALYS or the FLYING COBINAS, who are in the spine-locking category. The IDALYS have acquired the strange habit of riding a monocycle upside down round a track in the ceiling, and where you or I would be content with that, LUCIEN goes



one better by supporting MANUELA's trapeze with his teeth. Life at ground-level must seem cruelly humdrum to both the IDALYS and the COBINAS. These two stalwart young men climb nimbly to a dizzy bar which then revolves, while at either end they twiddle, attached by one hand or one foot—it doesn't matter which.

A whiff of smelling-salts, a little massage in the region of the back stud, and we are ready again for the groundlings. Of these the funniest are the THREE MIEHES, and the ARTHUR KLEIN COMEDY CYCLISTS. It so happens, without disadvantage, that a member of the first bears a striking resemblance to Arnold Bennett, while the second boasts a passable Einstein. The MIEHES are drolls of the top order on roller-skates, taking terrific punishment with indomitable cheerfulness, and the KLEINS are superb cyclists interrupted in their best tricks by an astonishing figure breathing fire and relativity, who scatters them with an exploding motor-cycle, fails dismally in imitation, and turns out, of course, the most accomplished of the lot.

Nearly all the neatest turns at the circus depend on an abnormal sense of poise, but this is particularly true of JOHN, a magnificently developed Danish boy of fifteen. Had he lived in the Middle Ages he would have been kept busy balancing angels on the point of a needle; as it is, he balances himself, on one hand, on a walking-stick. To make it less elementary he revolves, balances a ball on a pipe held in his mouth, and juggles with his free hand. By all means try it. What is even more wonderful is that he looks as if he had been born doing it; there isn't a shadow of doubt in his grin.

Another master of balance is ULFI, a young Swedish wizard on the tight-rope (or slack-wire? I never



know the difference). To him the wire is obviously wider than Piccadilly. He sits it on a stool, rides it on a monocyte, and climbs away from it up a ladder. I dare say he sleeps on it.

The YONGS, from China, are acrobats, or rather one jointless composite acrobat, who defy gravity with the flexibility of the most patent reading lamp. One YONG pulls off a single-hand balance on another YONG's neck, while a third YONG does the same to him—and you have to be very YONG indeed to manage all that. And not too old for the spirited exhibition of the FOUR MASSINOS, graceful and expert bouncers on the trampoline.

In the Circus itself there are no lions and no tigers, for which I am vastly grateful. And horses are less in evidence. But the animals are still nobly represented. The MILLS ELEPHANTS continue their marathon cricket-match, bowling one another scandalous spin-sneaks; GUERRE'S MUSICAL SEALIONS, their whiskers tuned to concert pitch, play the harmonica as well as their own beautiful game of noseball; and as for SCIPLINI'S CHIMPANZEES, what healthier reminder could we have? Powerful intellects, no doubt, but I like them best when they are sitting quietly in a row, like very old bored ladies at a parish council.

ERIC KEOWN



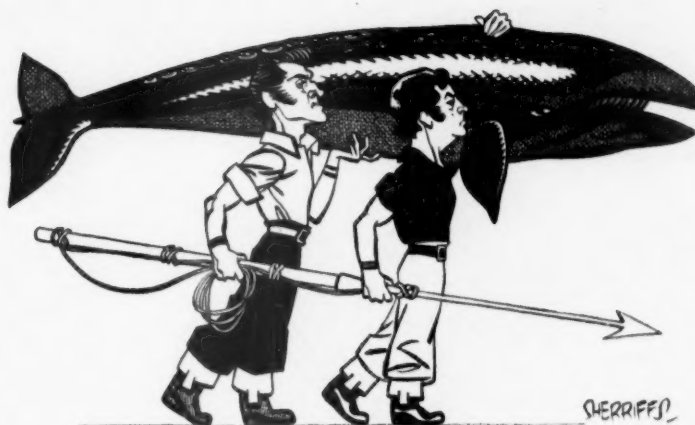
AT THE PICTURES

All the Brothers Were Valiant
Houdini

THE impressiveness of the visual effects and the great skill with which they are managed are the strength of *All the Brothers Were Valiant* (Director: RICHARD THORPE). The actual story is a rearrangement of . . . not exactly familiar, but at least used, ingredients: this is, in short, one of those stories about stern New England seafaring men of the eighteenth-fifties.

It seems that there was a New Bedford (Mass.) family named Shore; we are allowed to read some of the references to it in 1841 and 1848 ships' logs, from which it appears—in surprisingly twentieth-century calligraphy—that there existed a self-conscious tradition of writing "All the brothers were valiant" as a kind of pendant or refrain to the record every time one of them died on the job.

This is a plain sign that someone will be writing it at the end of the picture about one of the two brothers involved in this story, and since one of them, though more dashing than the other, is always quite ready to stoop to villainy, we know soon enough which it will be. STEWART GRANGER is this dubious character; when the story opens he is missing, having disappeared



[All the Brothers Were Valiant]

Mark Shore—STEWART GRANGER Joel Shore—ROBERT TAYLOR
Rhachianectes Glaucus—A GREY WHALE

somewhere in the Gilbert Islands, and the other—or noble—brother (ROBERT TAYLOR) takes the ship back there on a whaling voyage to look for him.

Found, he provides a long flashback about a startling adventure in which he acquired two bags of pearls that were dropped into a shallow lagoon; and when his conscientious brother refuses to risk the ship by going back to fetch them, he encourages a mutiny, as well as telling his brother's wife (who is on board—it's that kind of film) that her husband is a coward.

This makes her instantly transfer her affections (it's that kind of film) till the hero, who was only being sensible, not cowardly, almost single-handed quells the mutiny in a fight of tremendous and wide-ranging violence, afterwards recording his brother's death and adding the usual coda for the fade-out.

It may sound like hokum, and so it is in essentials, but technically, and in particular visually, it's very well done. Among the exciting sequences is an admirable one about the harpooning of a whale which then upsets the boat, and all the shipboard detail is interesting and worth looking at. The usual sort of sailing-ship adventure, yes; but uncommonly effective.

In the film *Houdini* (Director: GEORGE MARSHALL) the great man's life has been even more drastically edited and re-shaped than is usual in film biographies of show-business people. The manner of his death in reality was not nearly dramatic enough for the climax; so it has been arranged as the result of a final spectacular escape trick. True, it is the appendix that kills him, as it might kill any less strenuous citizen; but it kills him when he has been suspended head

downwards in a sort of up-ended transparent coffin full of water, in the presence of a theatre full of sensation-seekers, and after his wife's piercing scream from the back row has roused his faithful assistant to smash the water-tank with an axe.

Most of the story follows familiar lines, the difference being in detail. That is, where the average such biography consists of a piece of narrative cheesecloth on which are stuck a number of musical items, this is a pattern of magical and "escapology" tricks on a similar foundation. Early struggles, marriage, growing success, world tours (that old montage routine), unrivalled fame, climax: coloured by disagreement at first with a wife who would prefer security and a steady job, and by the restless wish to go one better.

TONY CURTIS makes a superficially convincing Houdini, though neither he nor his wife (JANET LEIGH) seems to age much over the years; and the tricks and escapes are presented very well. It's most efficient entertainment . . . on a fairly unintellectual level.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Apart from *The Kidnappers* (23/12/53), an unpretentiously good film with the remarkable infant, VINCENT WINTER, the London programmes of greatest interest remain as before: *Julius Caesar* (18/11/53), *M. Hulot's Holiday* (25/11/53), and *The Conquest of Everest*. The Disney *Snow White* and the *Seven Dwarfs* is back: it wears uncommonly well after sixteen years.

Releases include *Personal Affair* (4/11/53), an over-emotional story enjoyably well done.

RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

Term Report

Name: TV Service.

Age: About seven years.

Height and Weight: Variable, but usually below par.

Chest Expansion: Considerable, often when least deserved.

Number in form: One.

Position in form: First and last.
(Note: It is rumoured that a new boy, a commercial type, may soon win a free place in the school.)

NEWSREELS. A fine term's work. During the past few months there has been a very noticeable improvement both in the content and the presentation of the daily news-films. There are still far too many flabby airport interviews with flustered celebrities, and far too many visits to factories operating on the conveyor-belt system ("Here we see the raw material passing through the screening vat on its way to the levigating mill . . ."), but the quality of camera-work and editing is now first-rate. Someone has taught the newsreel team the value of the sudden momentary switch to humour, pathos or poetry, the value of a revealing flash of irrelevant intimacy in a sequence devoted to matter-of-fact routine reporting, the value of amusingly incongruous juxtaposition. The weekly budget of five Newsreels, lumped together each Saturday night, is one of TV's finest hours.

But there is still room for improvement. The commentaries are dull, pedestrian and riddled with meaningless make-weight clichés. And the "background music" is too often in the foreground—not in terms of decibels but in its over-eagerness to



establish setting and mood. Poor Elgar! He has already ghosted for Galsworthy and Trollope and scores of pompous documentaries: now he is roped in as TV's tame seagull.

DRAMA. In this subject TV's work shows little progress. The promise of four or five years ago has not been maintained, and weekly performances show a tendency to deteriorate. The trouble at the moment is that too much is being attempted. It seems uneconomic to produce an expensive play for a run of only two performances (Sunday and Thursday), even though the audience totals several millions. Many shows give the impression that all concerned—producers, actors, designers and prompters—are aware of this. The B.B.C. should be allowed and encouraged to film its own plays, to project them several times a year and to arrange seasonal festivals of TV drama.

VARIETY. Tries hard, but still woefully weak. But then, variety *everywhere* is weak. Humour is the spice of variety, and humour, as the stage, screen, "Light" and Fleet Street all know, is in dreadfully short supply. Television has borrowed "formula" humour from "steam radio" with some success, and in the

programmes of Eric Barker and Terry-Thomas manages to reconcile the need for continuity and the dangers of repetition with admirable economy. Stage humour can repeat itself twice nightly until its audience is used up: TV humour can repeat itself weekly—provided that the "jokes" are remodelled to some extent—until the formula is used up. This explains why TV comedians so quickly wear out their welcome, and why Norman Wisdom (who reappears only when the audience has had time to forget his "material") remains such a firm favourite.

I am uncertain whether to report on the term's "serials" under Variety or Drama. The marking would be low in either case.

EXTRA-MURAL ACTIVITIES. Excellent. This has been a wonderful year for the O.B. team. The Coronation, the "Ashes," the Cup Final, the F.I.F.A. game, athletics, show jumping . . . here is television at its best, a boon and a delight. Take the Wales v. New Zealand match at Cardiff Arms Park. Can the studios ever hope to equal the drama, the pageantry, the *music* of the preliminary ceremonies? All Wales singing, the All Blacks waltzing, the great crowd crowding. It was a fine thing to be at Cardiff that afternoon, but it was almost as exciting—I insist—to be two hundred miles away with a small screen, plenty of elbow-room, a handkerchief and a lot of ridiculous emotion.

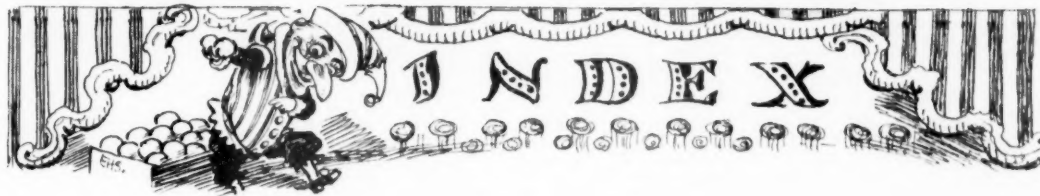
PARLOUR GAMES, ETC. If 1953 does not turn out to be the high watermark of their popularity I shall be amazed and disappointed. The trouble is that they are so cheap and easy to put together.

Headmaster's Remarks. Can do better. **BERNARD HOLLOWOOD**



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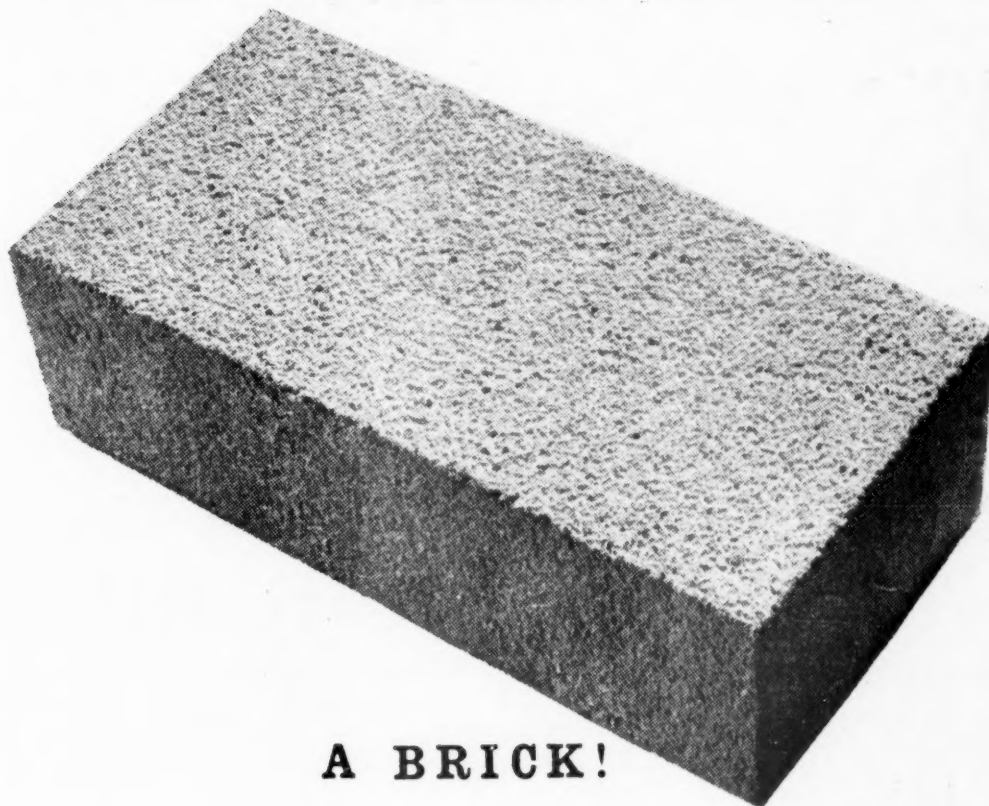
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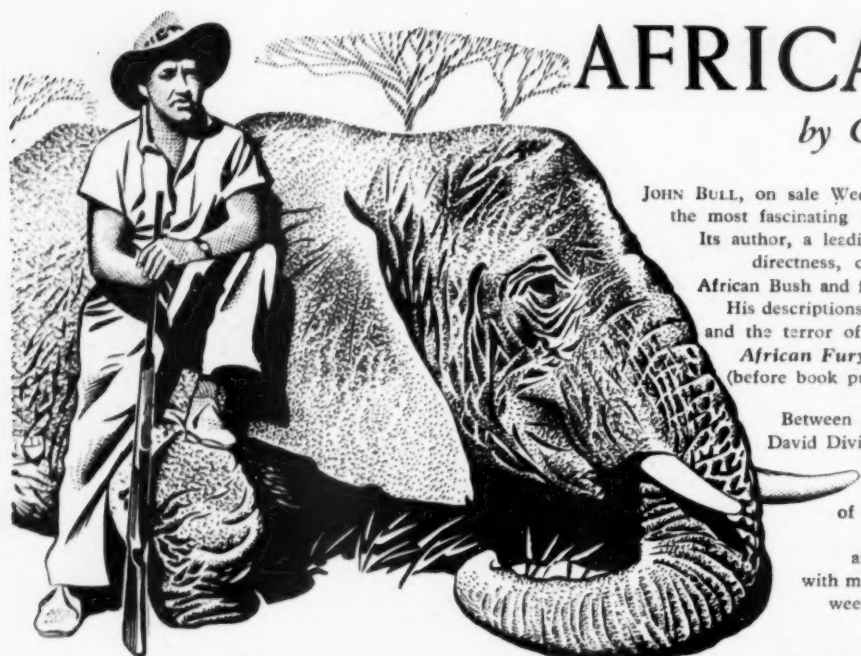
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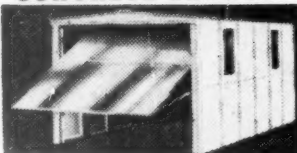
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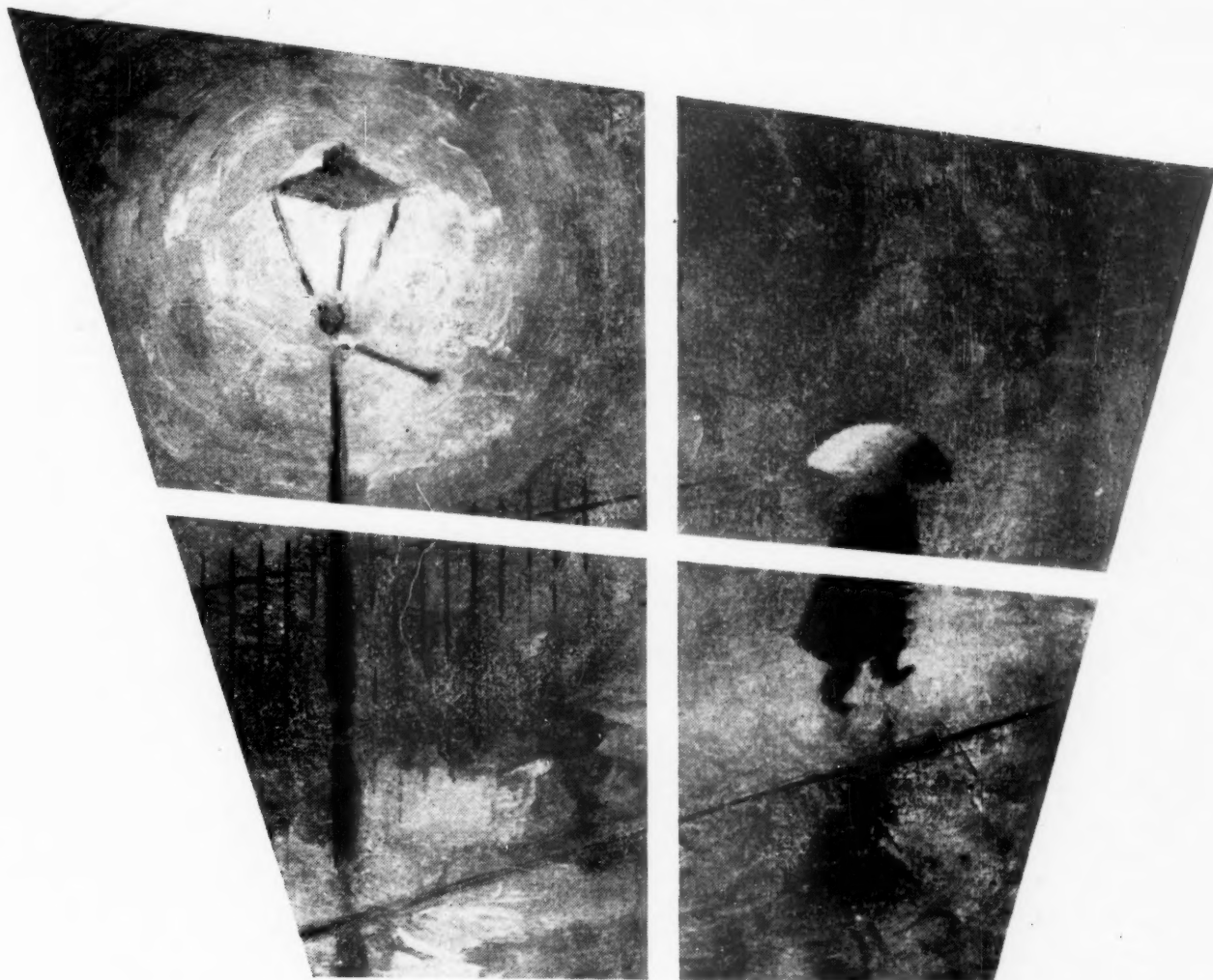


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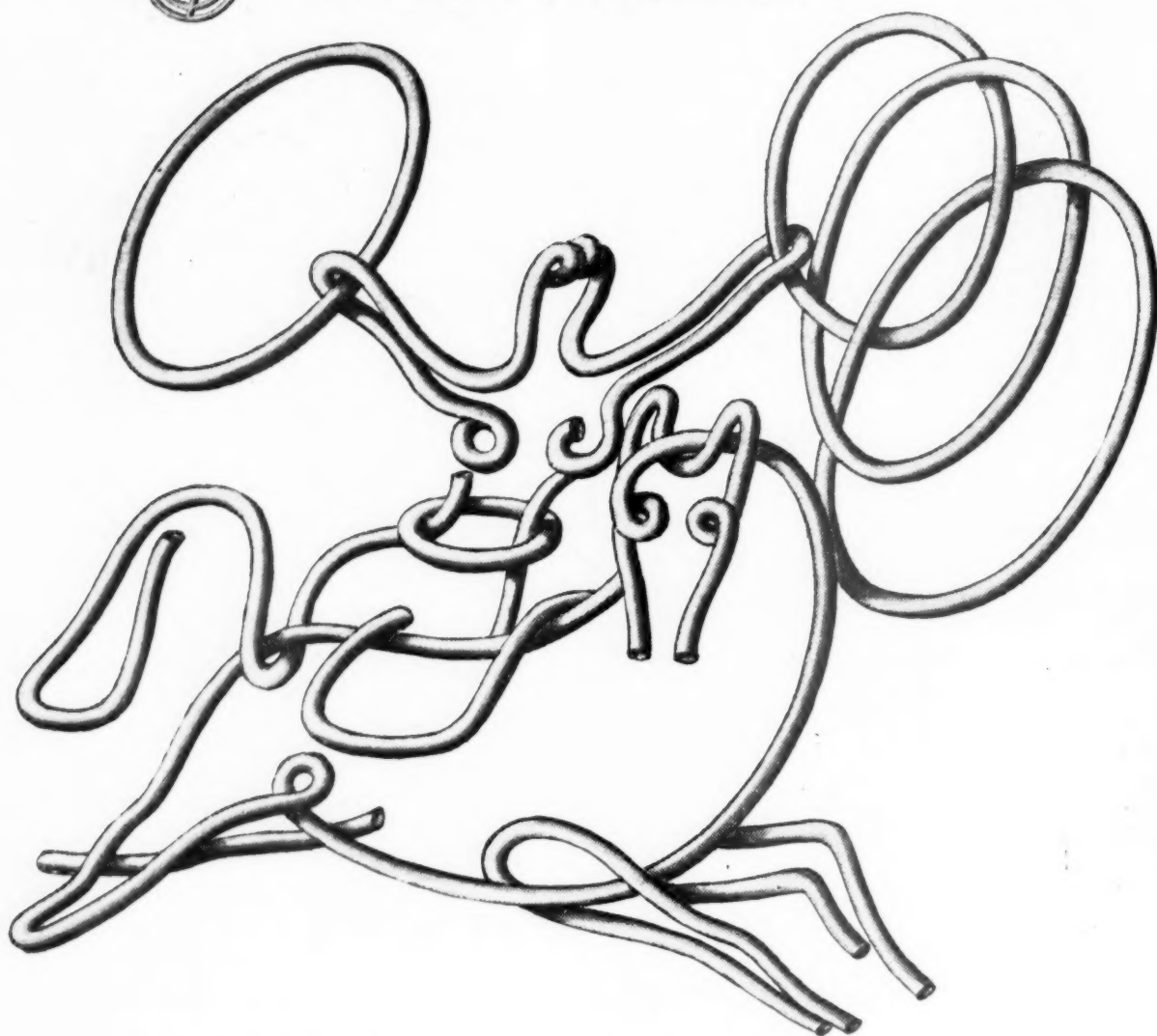
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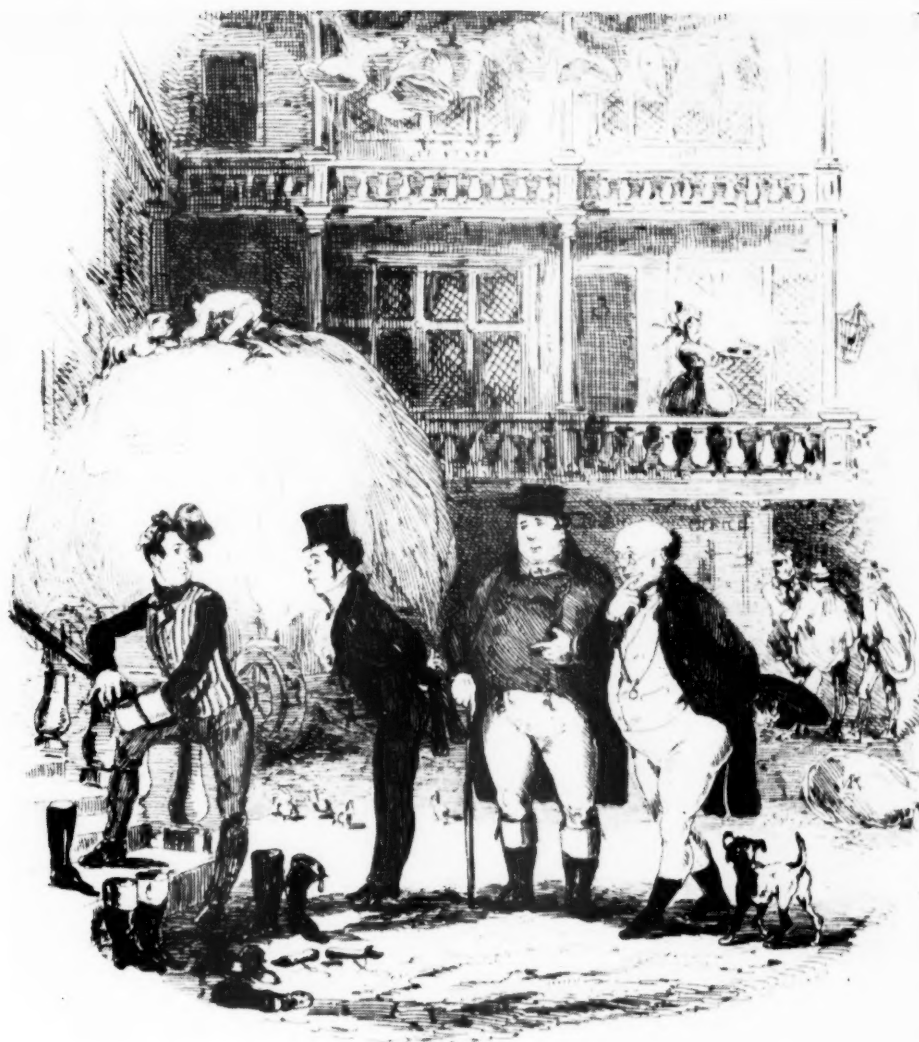


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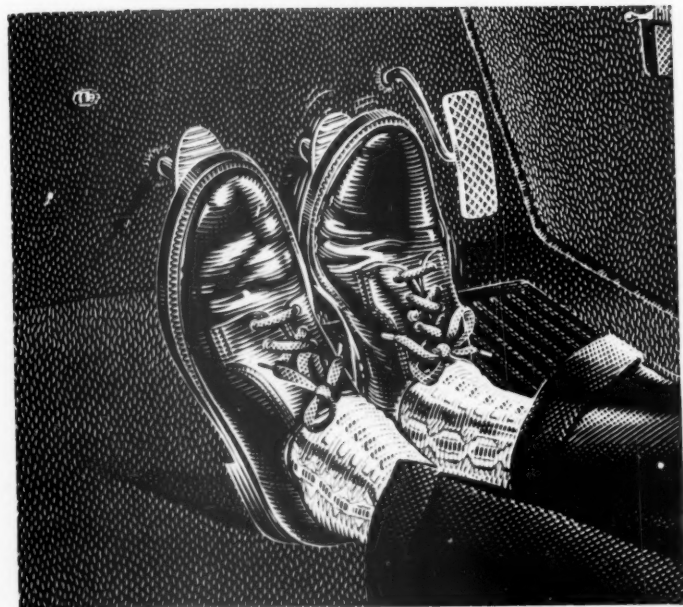
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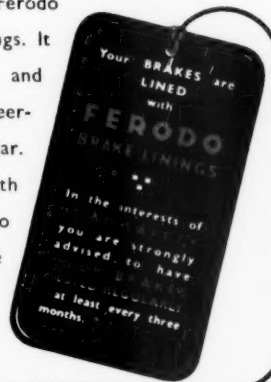
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